

GEOGRAPHICAL AND CHRONOLOGICAL FACTORS IN INDIAN ICONOGRAPHY

By C. SIVARAMAMURTI

How different iconographic features of Indian deities underwent variations, modifications and embellishments in different localities and ages is discussed here by the Superintendent of the Archaeological Section, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

INDIAN iconography teems with problems that merit a careful study. The simpler and earlier types of figures develop into complex forms in the medieval period : additional attributes are created and earlier ones frequently discarded or modified. Sometimes earlier iconographic concepts change so vitally that the original ones are difficult to recognize. Ornaments, apparel, pose, delineation of the limbs—all these details change from time to time. In addition to the differences due to chronological reasons, the geographical factor largely contributes to variations in iconographic forms, for the same image-concept may have different manifestations in the same period in different parts of India. The study of these differences, due to age and locality, is of great interest.

EARLY FEATURES

In the earliest depiction of deities more than a single pair of arms is unknown. The few existing images of the first two centuries before and after the Christian era are simple and are based on the popular Yaksha type ; they represent an elementary iconography which grows into a complex one during the succeeding centuries. The cults of Kubera, Balarāma, Vāsudeva and Śiva are the most important in the two centuries B. C. : temples of Kubera and Balarāma are mentioned by Patañjali¹ (second century B.C.) and a Nānāghāt² cave inscription of the first century B.C. opens with an invocation of Vāsudeva and Saṅkarshaṇa (Balarāma). The famous *kalpa-druma* from Besnagar, Gwalior, now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, must have formed the capital of a pillar (*dhvaja-stambha*) that stood in front of a temple of Kubera. In it we find the earliest representations of the gems (*nidhis*) that symbolize the glory of the god of wealth. The palm-capital from Pawāyā, also in Gwalior, doubtless adorned a temple of Saṅkarshaṇa. One of the earliest images of that deity, dating back to Śuṅga age, is preserved in the Lucknow Museum. No temple of Kāmadeva, so often referred to in Sanskrit literature, has survived, but we have a relic of such a temple in a crocodile- (*makara*-) capital of about the same age, also from Besnagar.

The crown of Viṣṇu and most other deities in medieval sculptures is absent in the earliest sculptures. Rudra, however, is described in the *Yajurveda* as *uṣṇīṣin*, or one wearing a turban. The representation of Śiva at Guḍimallam, which is assigned to about the second century B.C., shows him in this guise (fig. 1, a)³. The turban was the only head-gear known and used, and the *mukuta-maṇi* or head-gem was wrapped in the turban centrally or towards one side. Saṅkarshaṇa in the Lucknow Museum mentioned above wears a turban, like the other deities of the period (fig. 1, b). Even Śakra, traditionally

¹ *Prāsāde Dhanapati-Rāma-Keśavānām, Mahābhāṣya*, ed. F. Kielhorn (Bombay, 1892), I, p. 436.

² *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, V (London, 1883), p. 60.

³ The line-drawings illustrating the article are by the author.

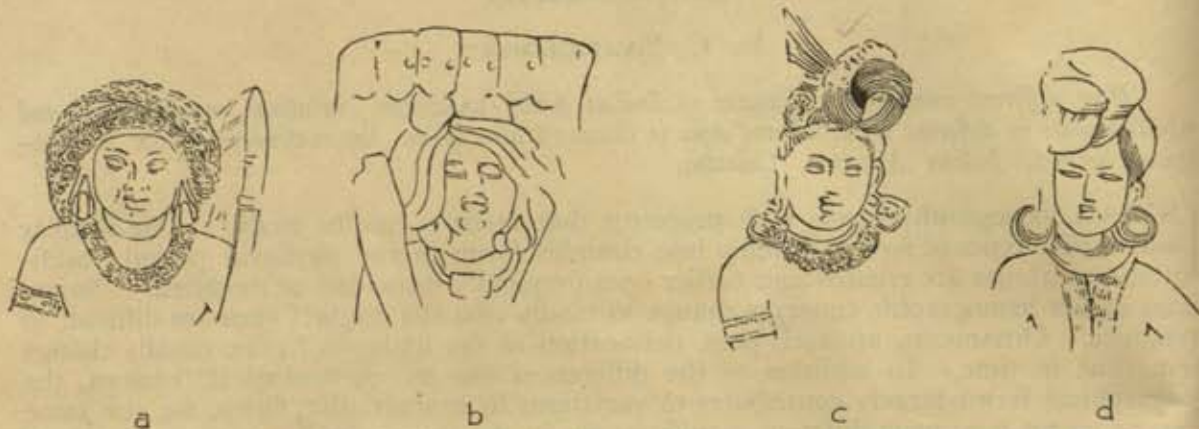


FIG. 1. a, Śiva as ushṇīṣhīn (wearing a turban), from Guḍimallam ; b, Balarāma as ushṇīṣhīn, in Lucknow Museum ; c, Sūrya as ushṇīṣhīn, from Bhājā ; d, Indra as ushṇīṣhīn, from Bhājā



FIG. 2. a, Indra as ushṇīṣhīn, from Sāncī ; b-d, as kirīṭin (wearing a crown), respectively from Sāncī, Gandhāra and Amarāvati

the *kirīṭin* ('wearer of the crown'), wears only a turban in his earliest representation at Sānchī (fig. 2, *a*). The crown replaces the turban of Śakra in the later sculptures on the gates at Sānchī itself (fig. 2, *b*). But in Gandhāra (fig. 2, *c*), Mathurā and later Śātavāhana sculptures (fig. 2, *d*), Śakra wears a distinctive crown. The early date of Indra at Bhājā (fig. 1, *d*) is definitely indicated by the turban on his head. The thick *varamālya-dāma* (flower-garland) on his neck is explained by the description of deities as *sragvin* ('wearer of garlands') in the epics.

The thunderbolt carried by Vajrapāṇi in all Gandhāra sculptures is shaped like a bone (fig. 3, *a*) and perhaps suggests its origin from the bones of Dadhichi, famous in Indian literature. But in early indigenous sculpture, as at Amarāvati and Nāgārjunikonda, the thunderbolt is three-pronged at both ends (fig. 3, *b*), a feature that continues in medieval sculptures (fig. 3, *c-d*).

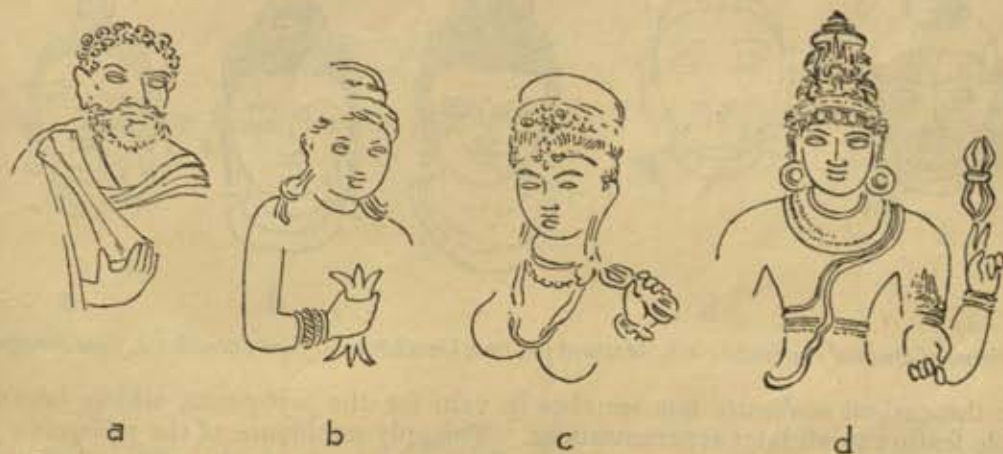


FIG. 3. Representations of vajra (thunderbolt) : *a*, as bone, from Gandhāra ; *b-d*, as a three-pronged weapon, respectively from Amarāvati, Ellora and Chidambaram

Śūrya, as seen in his earliest representations, for example at Bodhi-gayā and Bhājā (fig. 1, *c*), has a turban and rides a chariot drawn by only four horses and his retinue is very simple ; but he wears the *kirīṭa* in medieval sculptures and the free movement of his hands, as seen in early sculptures, becomes frozen into the stereotyped pose of *khaṭakāmukha* for carrying lotuses by their stalks, which becomes a distinguishing characteristic of the deity.

The earliest representations of Gaṇeśa have only a single pair of arms, figures with four or more arms being invariably later. The beginnings of the form of Gaṇeśa should be traced to the dwarf Yaksha with elephantine face from an early rail-coping at Amarāvati, which shows early features like the absence of crown, a natural animal-head and a single pair of arms. It may be recalled that Śiva-gaṇas form the model for the dwarf Yaksha here and it is but natural that the Gaṇeśa type also occurs. In Gupta sculptures from Bhumarā these features, including only one pair of arms, are still present, but at Deogarh we already have a start in the direction of an additional pair of arms. The Gaṇeśa beside the dancing figure of Śiva in the early Western Chālukyan cave at Bādāmi (sixth century) has only a single pair of arms and similarly the colossal Gaṇeśas at Biccavol (Godāvari District) and those in the Eastern Chālukyan territory generally lack the additional pair of arms and look extremely natural in the disposition of the limbs. The natural shape of

the elephant-head continues till the end of the early Chōla period (pl. IV A), and till about the eleventh-twelfth centuries nowhere do we find a Gaṇeśa with an unnaturally-shaped elephant-head.

The complex Buddhist pantheon of the medieval period is unknown in the earliest sculpture. Buddha, invariably represented by a symbol before the Christian era, is first portrayed in anthropomorphic form about the end of the first century, when at Mathurā he is represented with a single sinistral curl (fig. 4, *a*) or a line above the forehead (fig. 4, *b*). In Gandhāra sculptures he has a wavy knot of hair (fig. 4, *c*), and later Kushan and Gupta sculptures represent the protuberance on his skull and small curls all over the head (fig. 4, *d*). The flame above this is a feature added in medieval sculptures (fig. 4, *e*), more popular in South than in North India.



FIG. 4. Forms of Buddha's ushṇisha : *a-b*, Mathurā ; *c*, from Gandhāra ; *d*, from Sārnāth ; *e*, from Nāgapaṭṭinam

In the earliest sculpture one searches in vain for the *yajñopavīta*, which became an invariable feature in all later representations. The only semblance of the *yajñopavīta* which we find occasionally in early sculptures is the *vastra-yajñopavīta* or the upper cloth worn in *yajñopavīta*-fashion to the left (fig. 5, *a-b*) in accordance with the description in the *Yajurveda*. In very early sculptures from Bharhut, Bodh-gayā, Amarāvati and Sāncī there are representations of this type, which in medieval sculptures occasionally replaces the regular *yajñopavīta* on the representations of Dakṣiṇā-mūrti or Brahmā.

For the first time in Ikshvāku sculpture (third century) the *yajñopavīta* appears, long and composed of pearls (fig. 7, *a* and *b*), answering to the description of *muktā-yajñopavīta* of Kālidāsa.¹ This type, the *vastra-yajñopavīta* and the *ajina-yajñopavīta* (fig. 6) described in the Vedas occur in Gupta and medieval sculptures. In the paintings and sculptures of Ajantā the charm of the *muktā-yajñopavīta* is seen at its best (fig. 7, *c*), though it continues later in Chālukyan and Pallava-Chōla sculptures (fig. 7, *d* and *e*). A double-bell clasp (fig. 8) with ribbon and tassels (fig. 9) distinguishes the *yajñopavīta* of the early medieval period in South India ; it is shaped like a sinuous band, which separates into strands in later sculpture in South India (fig. 10). When this *yajñopavīta* runs over the right arm of a deity it suggests a very early medieval date for sculptures in South India and the Deccan (fig. 11). The development of ornamental motifs is clearly indicated by the changes in the Pallava, Chōla and other periods in South India not only of *yajñopavīta* (fig. 13, 2) but of *suvarṇa-vaikakṣhaka* (fig. 13, 1), *udara-bandha* (fig. 13, 2), *kaṭisūtra* (figs. 12 and 13, 3) and the arrangements of drapery and tassels.

¹ *Kumārasambhava*, VI, 6.

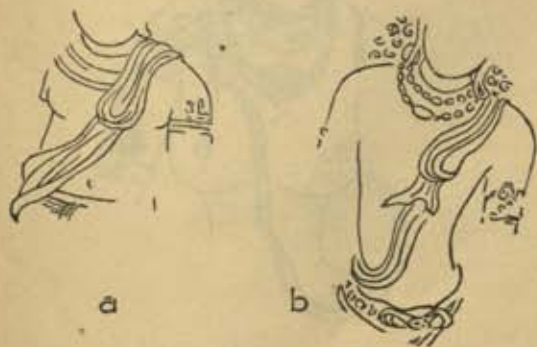


FIG. 5. *Yajñopavita* in cloth form : a, from Patna ; b, from Kāveripākkam



FIG. 6. *Yajñopavita* in deer-skin form, from Deogarh



FIG. 7. *Yajñopavita* in pearl-string form : a, from Amarāvati ; b, from Nāgārjunikonda ; c, from Ajanṭā ; d, from Bādāmi ; e, in Madras Museum



FIG. 8. *Yajñopavita with double-bell clasp, sculpture in Madras Museum*



FIG. 9. *Yajñopavita with ribbon and tassels, sculpture in Madras Museum*



FIG. 10. *Yajñopavita as sinuous band, sculpture in Madras Museum*



FIG. 11. *Yajñopavita running over the right arm, sculpture in Madras Museum*



FIG. 12. *Katisutra, sculpture in Madras Museum*

1



a



b

2



a



b

3



a



b

FIG. 13. 1, *suvarṇa-vaikakshaka*: a, from Mahābalipuram, b, from Tanjore; 2, *yajñopavīta* and *udara-bandha*, a, from Tiruchirapalli, b, from Tanjore; 3, *kaṣīṣṭra*, a, from Mahābalipuram, b, from Tanjore

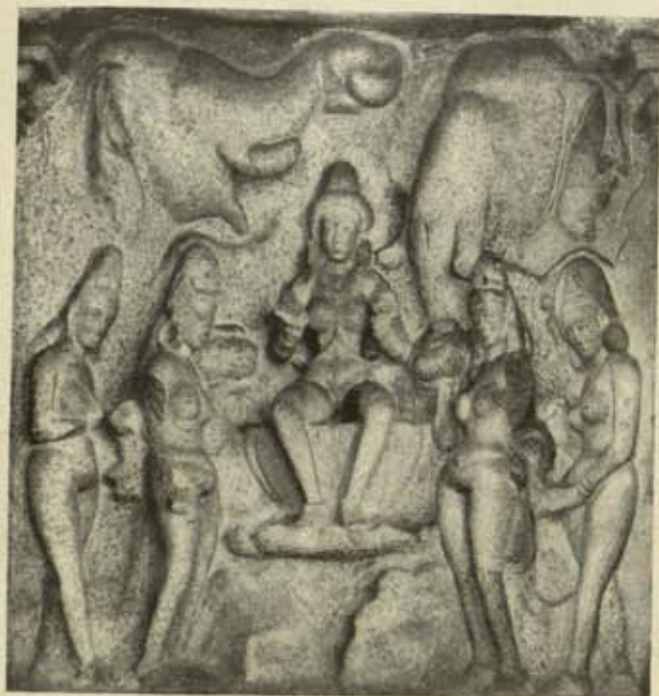
Gajalakshmi, described as carved on the door-lintels of Rāvaṇa's *Pushpaka*-palace in *Laṅkā* by Vālmiki¹, is a very popular motif repeated on the gates of Sāncī (pl. II B) and represents Lakshmi as standing or seated on the lotus and being bathed by elephants. Lakshmi here has a single pair of arms, though in later sculptures she may have two (pl. II A) or even four hands and not only carries lotuses in a conventional manner but is seated in a rather stiff *padmāsana* pose.

The representation of river-goddesses, of which Gaṅgā and Yamunā are the most famous and occur frequently in Gupta and medieval sculptures of northern and central India, can be traced back to a concept of the goddess of plenty, a concept in which Śrī-Bhū and Nadi-devatās are commingled, and a beautiful damsel carrying food in a plate and water in a jar standing on a *makara*, Gaṅgā's vehicle, suggests the goddess of food, water, plenty and prosperity. An identical iconographic concept of this deity is represented at Mathurā and Amarāvati (fig. 14). Divested of the food-plate or the *sasya* (corn) symbolizing *Prithivī* and with only the water-jar in her hand and standing on her vehicle, the goddess is identical with the Nadi-devatā. At Amarāvati, both the river-goddesses on either side of a central theme stand on *makara*, which in the earliest sculptures was the common vehicle for all Nadi-devatās (pl. II D). In later days the *makara* came to be associated only with Gaṅgā, and in Gupta sculpture the tortoise appears as the vehicle of Yamunā.



FIG. 14. Damsels carrying food and water, respectively from Mathurā and Amarāvati

¹ *Rāmāyaṇa*, V, vii, 14.



A



C



B



D

A and B, Gajalakshmi, respectively from Mahābalipuram, Chingleput, and Sānchī, Bhopal; C, Gaṅgā on door-jamb, from Tādpatri; D, river-goddess, from Amrāvati rail (British Museum)



A



B



C



D



E

Sūrya: A, from Bodh-gayā; B, from Sūryanārkoil, Tanjore; C, from Bihar (Indian Museum); D, from Bengal (Indian Museum); E, from Rajasthan



A



B



C



D

Gaṇeśa: A, from Biccavol; B, from Velankanni, Tanjore (Madras Museum); C, from Halebid; D, from Fetgrām, North Bengal (Indian Museum)



A. *Mātṛikās*, from Mathurā (Mathurā Museum)



B. *Chāmūṇḍā*, from Jāyṇpur, Cuttack



C. *Vārāhī*, from Jāyṇpur, Cuttack

As one enters the imposing *gopuras* of South Indian temples, one sees on either side of the door-jamb the representation of a woman standing on *makara* and holding a thick creeper, which issues from the mouth of the *makara*-vehicle beneath her feet and runs up in sinuous fashion, forming a sequence of circular medallions enclosing carvings of deities (pl. II C). On both sides the vehicle is a *makara*. The concept here is a combination of Gaṅgā with the early *vṛikṣhakā* or *śālabhañjikā* figures that we find at Sāñchī and elsewhere.

In Pallava and Choḷa temples in South India a fat short lady, with a conspicuous belly and peculiar headgear, with a bovine-headed youth and a beautiful damsel on either side and with a crow-banner, attracts attention. This deity, known as Jyeshthā, is the goddess of sloth, misfortune and everything inauspicious; she is therefore considered Alakshmī, the opposite of Lakshmī, the goddess of fortune, whose elder sister she is. Her worship, with a view to avoiding misfortune, was popular, and in the Pallava and Choḷa periods shrines for Jyeshthā were freely erected. In almost every Choḷa temple of repute Jyeshthā has a shrine, but from the late Choḷa or Vijayanagara period onwards her worship fell into disuse.

In and after the Kushan period the Sapta-mātrikās have had their representations, and in the early ones all the Mātrikās are youthful goddesses (pl. V A). The beauty of these goddesses carrying children on their laps is best observed in the Brāhmaṇical caves of Ellora. Even Vārāhī has here a human face, and Chāmuṇḍā is not the fearful emaciated skeleton that she is in later sculptures.

LATER REGIONAL VARIATIONS

SŪRYA

The locality, no less than the age, in which a deity is carved may determine the form of the figure. Sūrya in a chariot drawn by four horses can at once be distinguished as early (pl. III A), for in later representations the chariot has seven horses. Similarly a Sūrya with bare feet can at once be recognized as being from South India (pl. III B) or the Deccan and can be distinguished from his North Indian representations with top-boots (pl. III C), probably following the direction given in the *Bṛihatsaṃhitā* that Sūrya should have the 'northern dress'.¹

In the representations of Sūrya from North India a great retinue is always shown as attending on him: Daṇḍa and Piṅgala, one a scribe and the other an aide-de-camp, stand beside him on either side, and his wives, Chhāyā and Suvarchasā, flank him. Aruṇa drives his chariot drawn by seven horses, which are shown like the pigs yoked to the chariot of the Buddhist goddess of dawn, Mārīchī, whose concept is based on that of Sūrya. Other attendants of Sūrya are two amazons carrying a drawn bow and arrow to shoot at and dispel darkness. Sometimes more attendants are represented, but Daṇḍa and Piṅgala, Chhāyā and Suvarchasā and especially the amazons are always found in representations from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan (pl. III E), Gujarat, Orissa, Bihar and Bengal (pl. III D). The amazons occur even in the early medieval sculpture at Ellora, and this feature, though essentially a North Indian one, is found as far south as the Hoysala area. Chhāyā and Suvarchasā are represented everywhere except in the Tamil country, where their representation is very rare; Sūrya is here shown almost always alone, bereft of retinue and with neither the chariot beneath his feet nor the horses. Even in late

¹ N. K. Bhattasali, *Iconography of Buddhist and Brāhmaṇical Sculptures in the Dacca Museum* (Dacca, 1929), p. 158.

Chālukyan sculpture from the Telugu and Kanarese districts the queens and the horses are not omitted.

GAṆEŚA

Gaṇeśa in the Telugu (pl. IV A) and Kanarese districts (pl. IV C) is easily distinguished from Gaṇeśa in Chōḷa territory (pl. IV B). The Orissa type of Gaṇeśa is distinct and the Gaṇeśa from Bengal (pl. IV D) and Bihar is yet another type. Taking the trunk of Gaṇeśa alone, its disposition betrays the locality of the figure. In the Tamil country the Gaṇeśas of the Pallava, Chōḷa and slightly later periods are distinguished by most of the length of the trunk running down vertically on the paunch and finally curving to touch the sweets in the left palm (fig. 15, 2). The Gaṇeśa of the Kanarese districts, on the other hand, has the entire trunk turned to the left with a curve at the tip which rests on the bowl of sweets in the left hand (fig. 15, 1 c). The trunk of the Gaṇeśa of the Orissa school sometimes twirls slantingly and sinuously towards the bowl in his left hand (fig. 15, 3 a).

In all South Indian representations of Gaṇeśa, the *kaṇḍa-mukūṭa*, prescribed for goddesses and juvenile deities, is specially used (fig. 15, 2). But in the early representations in the Western and the Eastern Chālukyan area, the crown is absent and the elephant's temples are fashioned in a natural manner (fig. 15, 1 b). The type of Gaṇeśa represented in the Gupta sculpture at Deogarh, Jhānsī District (fig. 15, 1 a), without the *kirīṭa*, embodies Gupta tradition and is the source of inspiration for the style in the Chālukyan area. Like Śiva, Gaṇeśa in Orissa, Bengal and Bihar wears the *jaṭā-mukūṭa* (fig. 15, 3), a feature absent elsewhere in India. Similarly it can be noticed that the decorative treatment of Gaṇeśa is at its peak in the later Chālukyan period. The strings of bells that adorn Gaṇeśa in comparatively early sculptures from the Kanarese districts are as distinctive as the profuse pearl and gem-set jewellery adorning this deity in late Chālukyan and Hoysala sculpture (fig. 15, 1 c). In Java, Gaṇeśa's headgear has a skull on it and he is so seated that the soles of his two short legs come together.

THE SAPTA-MĀTRIKĀS

The representation of the Saptā-mātrikās also presents interesting local and chronological divergences. In early Pallava representations of the group (fig. 17), in Nolamba sculptures of about the ninth century (fig. 16, b) and even in early Chōḷa sculptures (fig. 16, a) and later in the Tamil country, Chāmuṇḍā is represented as a youthful woman with dishevelled hair and wearing *nāga-kuchabandha* (breast-band of serpents) and *kapāla-yajñopavīta* (*yajñopavīta* of skulls). But in late medieval Chālukyan sculptures, those from the Kanarese districts and in the ones from Orissa and Bengal, the representation of Chāmuṇḍā is as an emaciated woman with sunken eyes and skeleton-frame, frightful to behold. Though some iconographic texts, e.g. the *Vishṇudharmottara* and *Pūrvakāraṇāgama*, require a corpse as her vehicle, she is usually represented with a jackal as her vehicle in South India and the Deccan. In the representations from Orissa and Bengal, a corpse is placed beneath her with a jackal close to it. One of the finest representations of Chāmuṇḍā answering to this description is from Jāipur in Orissa (pl. V B). At Ellora Chāmuṇḍā has the owl as her vehicle, as the *Pūrvakāraṇāgama* requires her to be represented. The early human sculpture for Vārāhī is replaced by a boar's head in medieval sculpture (pl. V C).

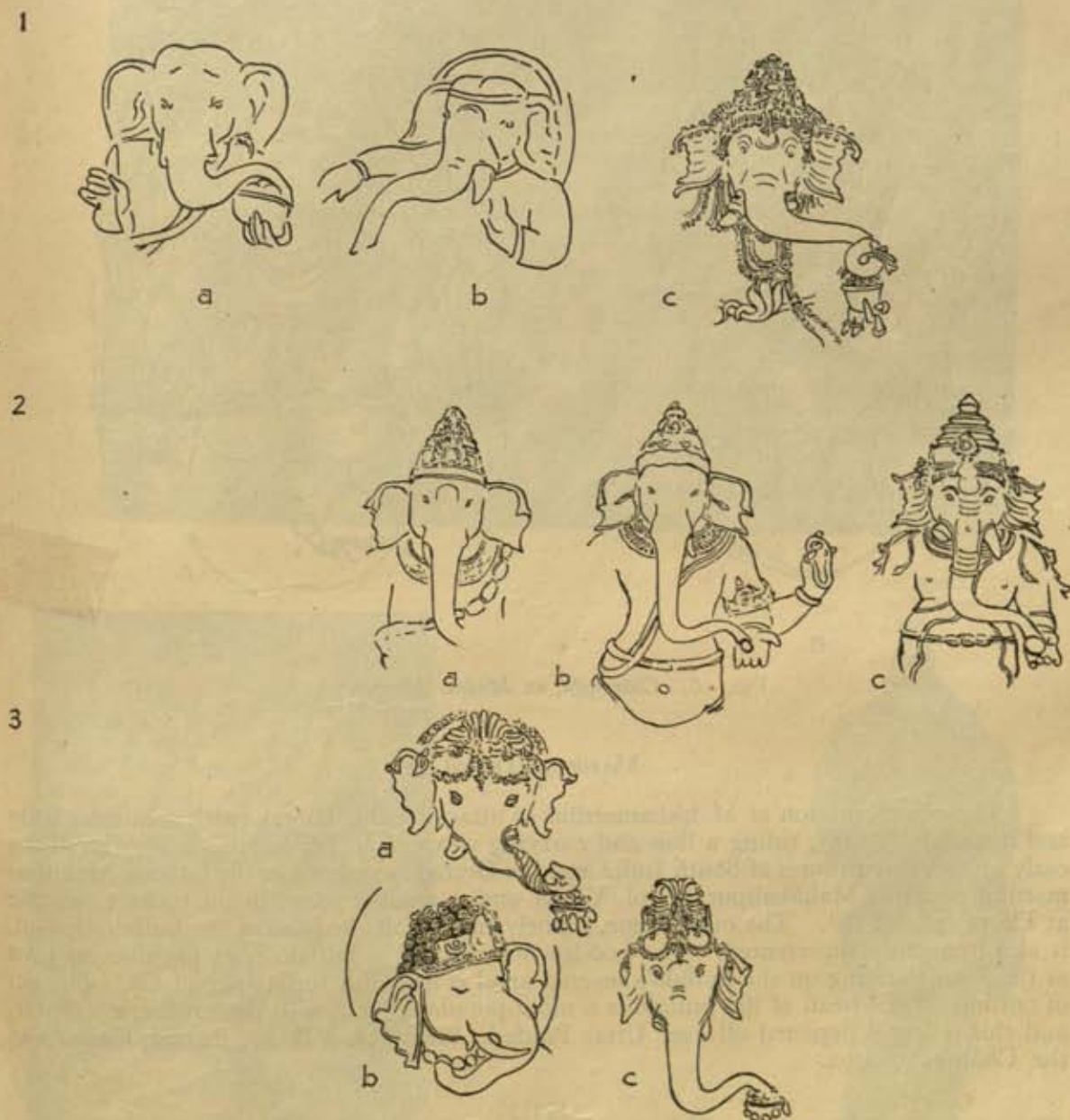


FIG. 15. Forms of trunk and crown of Gaṇeśa : 1, a, from Deogarh, b, from Bādāmi, c, from Halebid ; 2, a, from Tiruchirapalli, b-c, in Madras Museum ; 3, a, from Mukhalingam, b, from Orissa, c, from Bihar



a



b

FIG. 16. *Chāmūṇḍā*, in *Madras Museum*

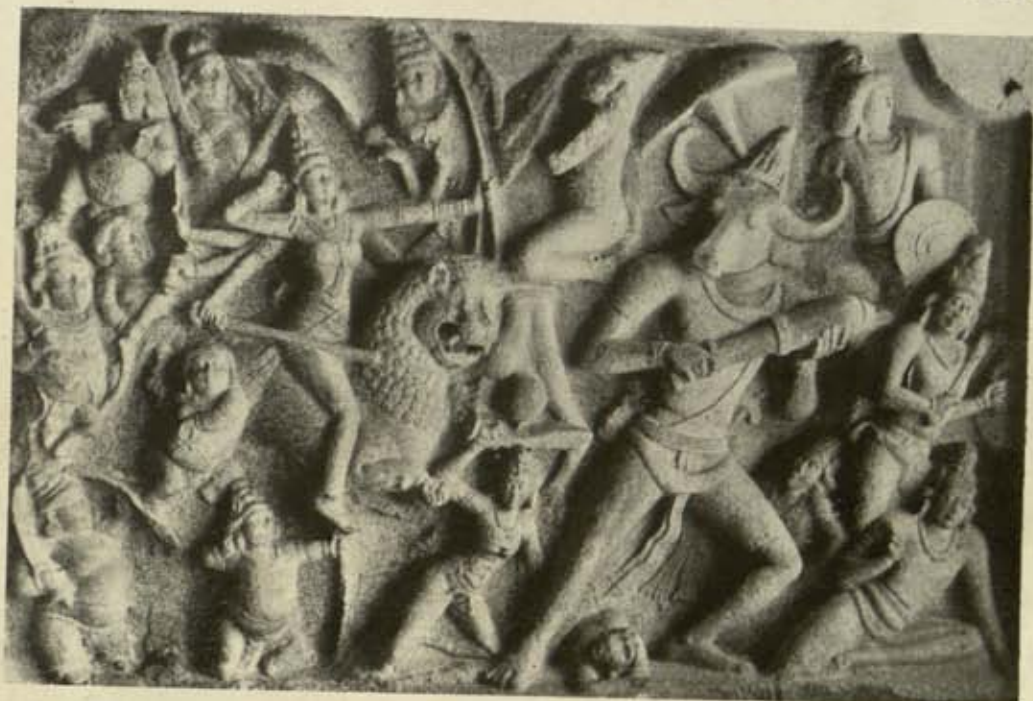
MAHISHAMARDINĪ

The representation of Mahishamardinī as attacking the demon (with a human body and a buffalo's head), riding a lion and carrying weapons in her hands, is popular in the early medieval sculptures of South India and the Deccan, as is seen in the famous Mahishamardinī panel at Mahābalipuram (pl. VI A) and a similar panel in the rock-cut temple at Ellora (pl. VI B)¹. The other scene, namely cutting off the head of the buffalo-demon, is also frequently represented. The goddess standing on a buffalo is as peculiar to Java as the form standing on the buffalo's severed head is to South India (pl. VI C). The act of cutting off the head of the buffalo is a more popular theme with the northern sculptor, and this is found depicted all over Uttar Pradesh, Bihar (pl. VII A), Bengal, Orissa and the Chālukyan area.

KĀLĪ

In the early specimens of South India, in both the Tamil and the Kanarese areas, the early medieval sculptures of Kālī and Chāmūṇḍā show her with flaming hairs, the *kapāla-yajñopavīta*, *nāga-kuchabandha* and a special characteristic, the *preta-kuṇḍala*, a ring

¹ R. P. Chanda, 'Medieval Indian Sculpture', *An. Rep. Arch. Surv. Ind.*, 1929-30 (1935), p. 220.



A



B



C

Mahishamardini: A, from Mahabalipuram, Chingleput; B, from Ellora, Hyderabad; C, from Kumbakonam, Tanjore



A



B



C



D

A, Mahishamardini, from Dulmi, Mānbhūm (Indian Museum); B, Pārvatī, from Jāmbavanodai, Tanjore (Madras Museum); C, from Mandoil, Rājshāhī (Rājshāhī Museum); D, from Muhammadpur, Tipperah (Indian Museum)



A

Agni: A, in Madras Museum; B, from Bihar



B

32C



C, Navagrahas, from Gorakhpur



A. *Navagrahas, from Sūryanārkoil, Tanjore*



B



C



D

Brahṃā: B, from North Bengal (Indian Museum); C, from Banaras (Indian Museum); D, from Paśupatikoil, Tanjore

on the right ear with a corpse suspended from it (figs. 16 and 17). Like the *yajñopavīta* in other Pallava sculptures, the *kapāla-yajñopavīta* of Chāmuṇḍā has the tendency of going over the right arm. The Chāmuṇḍā of the Sapta-mātrikā group from Satyamangalam (South Arcot District), now preserved in the Madras Museum, is a good example of the Pallava representation of the deity. In all periods Chāmuṇḍā is represented in the Tamil districts with normal physical proportions, while in the Kanarese districts later medieval sculptures show her as a fearful and emaciated woman. The sculpture from Hemāvatī is still normal, as it is not so late and conforms to the standard of the Ellora Mātrikās which are a century earlier in date.



FIG. 17. Chāmuṇḍā, from Satyamangalam (Madras Museum)

PĀRVATĪ

When this goddess is represented in South India with a single pair of arms, she holds the *līlā-kamala* or sportive lotus in one hand, while the other hand hangs free in *lola* position when she is standing (pl. VII B), or rests on the seat when she is seated. When she is represented with four arms, one pair of arms carries the *pāśa* (noose) and *aṅkuśa* (goad), while the other pair is either in *abhaya* and *varada* or carries the cane-bow and flowery arrows. The rosary, flower, *abhaya* and *varada* also engage the four hands of the deity in some cases as also the *ratna-kalāśa* (pot of gems) and the lotus. She may be shown wearing either a *jaṭā-mukuta* or *karanda-mukuta*. In the sculptures from Bengal it is mostly the rosary, a peculiar trident, *ratna-kalāśa* and *varada* that determine the disposition of hands of the deity (pl. VII C). The *varada*-hand sometimes carries a fruit or flower. Sometimes she is shown with a single pair of arms (pl. VII D). The *jaṭā-mukuta* is also always present, though there is a pearl-ornament over it. The *karanda-mukuta* never occurs here: in fact it is unknown in the sculptures of these parts.

CONSORTS OF DEITIES

In all cases where two wives occur with a deity in South India, as in the case of

Vishṇu, the principal one, always to the right, wears a *kucha-bandha* (breast-band), sometimes beautifully ornamented (fig. 18). But in the case of Śiva, even though Gaṅgā and Pārvatī are both present, the *kucha-bandha* on Pārvatī is absent, as Gaṅgā does not appear beside Śiva but on his locks. In all normal cases, however, where two wives are present, such as Śrī and Bhūdevī, Vallī and Devasenā, Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā, the consort to the right has the *kucha-bandha*. This feature is absent in North Indian sculpture.



FIG. 18. Disposition of ornamental *kucha-bandha* (breast-band) on Devī, in Madras Museum



FIG. 19. Gupta coin showing king flanked by two damsels on obverse and lady amidst lotuses on reverse

The consorts of Vishṇu are Śrī and Bhūdevī everywhere except in sculptures of north-eastern India, where it is Śrī and Sarasvatī on either side. Sarasvatī is more commonly known as the spouse of Brahmā, and it is rather surprising to find her in Bengal sculptures as a consort of Vishṇu. The tradition of representing Vishṇu with Śrī and Sarasvatī seems to be fairly old, as is seen in an early medieval sculpture in the Dacca Museum, the date of which is indicated by harp-type of *viṇā* in the hands of Sarasvatī, a type never found in sculpture after the ninth century. Even on a type of Gupta coins (fig. 19) the king is shown seated on a couch with two goddesses, presumably representing Śrī and Sarasvatī, approaching him from either side. Exceptions to the general rule of Śrī and Sarasvatī as spouses of Vishṇu in north-eastern sculpture are to be seen in the representations of Vishṇu from Sāhebganj (Santal Parganas) and Sāgardighī (Mūrshidābād District), in which Śrī and Bhūdevī flank the god.

AGNI

In early medieval representations of Agni all over India that follow earlier traditions the common features are that he has only a single pair of arms and that either the flames are present as a crown as in a early Chola sculpture from the Madras Museum (pl. VIII A) or are all over his body as in a sculpture from Bihar in the Indian Museum

(pl. VIII B). This latter method of representation follows the earlier Kushan tradition from Mathurā. In the representations of Agni in South India a beard is unknown, but in Bihar and Bengal the beard is an invariable factor. Even in one of the modern paintings of Agni by one of Bengal's reputed painters of the new revivalist school the form of Agni is so conceived that the beard vies only with the shaggy coat of the ram-vehicle in producing the flame-effect in the picture.¹ Here the depiction of the two heads, four horns, seven arms and three legs follows the later tradition popular all over the land, a late Chola example of which, without the beard, is found in the famous temple of Naṭarāja at Chidambaram.

THE PLANETS

The representation of planets in South India is never in a row as in North India (pl. VIII C). The position of each planet is defined, Sūrya being at the centre and the other eight planets at the corners and in between on all the four sides. Some may be represented with two hands, others with four (pl. IX A). Though in South Indian sculptures Chandra is represented with lilies in both his hands and the *chandra-maṇḍala* (lunar disc) behind his head (like Sūrya carrying lotuses and with the *bhā-maṇḍala*—luminous disc—behind his head), Chandra in North India carries a *gadā* in one of his two hands. Similarly all the other planets are shown with only two hands each. Rāhu is depicted all head and just two arms. The head is crowned with snake-hoods, as is usual all over India, the face itself being frightful and grizzly. The hands are held downwards as if in the act of pouring something; and, when we remember that the *Rūpamaṇḍana* prescribes a sacrificial pit as his seat, the hands in *pushpa-puṭa* as if offering *āhuti* should suggest the pit. It is also possible that this pose of the hands suggests the act of eating, as according to Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (IX, 145) *samyuṭa-hasta* indicates eating. A sculpture from the Navagrahas from the Rājshāhī Museum shows the moon in the hands of Rāhu, and this makes the scene of eating very clear. In North Indian sculptures, moreover, the planets are always represented in a row in separate little panels one beside the other, and the whole frieze serves as a lintel of the entrance of a shrine, usually in the *jagamohan* (front porch). This is an essential difference between the representations of Navagrahas in North and South India.

LOCAL DEITIES

A number of deities are purely local; an instance is Hariharaputra, the son of Śiva, and Mohinī (Vishṇu). Representations of this deity are very common in South India, especially in the Tamil districts and Malābār, but are not found elsewhere. The North Indian deity Revanta is equally unknown in South India and the Deccan; similarly, Manasā, so popular in Bengal, is unrepresented elsewhere.

BRAHMĀ

Like all deities who are especially called *tridaśas* or 'ageless', the youthful representation of Brahmā is common in central and eastern India. But in Chāḷukyan sculptures and medieval sculptures from Gujarat and Rajasthan Brahmā is represented with a beard like an old sage, emphasizing the *Pitāmaha* (grandfather) aspect of the god. In

¹ Painting of Agni by Nandalal Bose, reproduced in D. A. Mackenzie, *Indian Myth and Legend* (London), pl. facing p. 20.

early sculptures from the Bādāmi-Aihoḷe region, however, the beard is totally absent, in accordance with the earlier Gupta tradition, as in the bronze image in the Karachi Museum and on the representation on a lotus in the Śeṣhaśāyin panel from Deogarh (pl. XI A). Examples of bearded Brahmā come from the Bellary District, Dhārwar, Gujarat, Kālanjar, Sopārā, etc. Even in Bengal there are rare instances of bearded representations. But he is shown there as pot-bellied and somewhat dwarfish (pl. IX B and C), a late medieval North Indian tradition, absent in South India, where his body-contours are as slim as those of any other deity (pl. IX D).

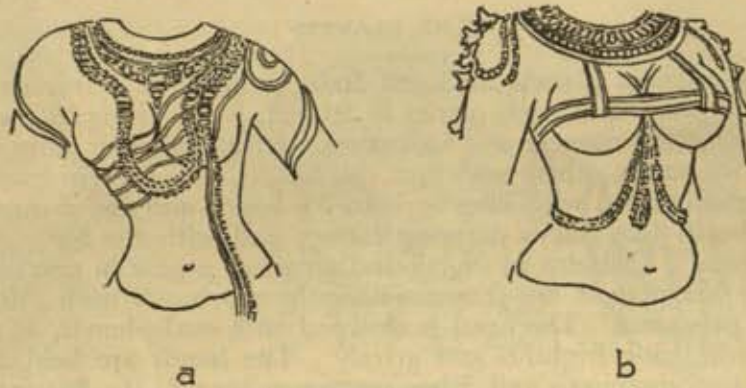


FIG. 20. *Stanottariya* and *kucha-bandha* as covering for breasts in, a, Bengal and b, Tamil sculpture

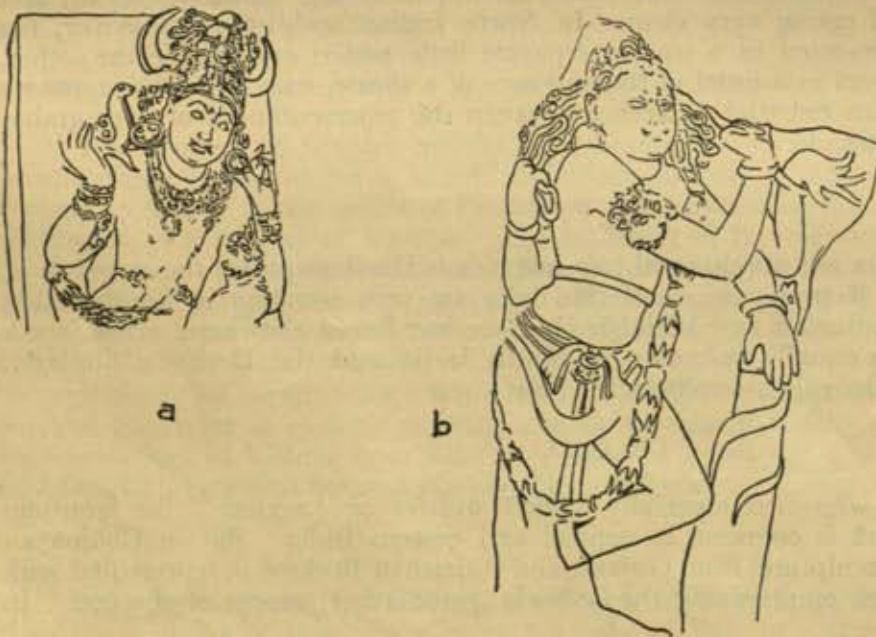


FIG. 21. *Dvārapāla* wearing *yajñopavīta* in flower-garland form : a, from Kāveripākkam ; b, from Vijayawāḍa (both in Madras Museum)

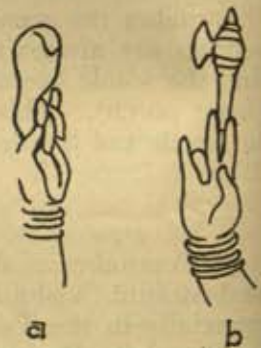


FIG. 22. *Mode of holding weapons* : a, natural, sculpture in Madras Museum ; b, in *kartarimukha*, bronze in Madras Museum

CLOTHING, ORNAMENTATION AND WEAPONS

A flowing cloth, shown by a wavy line over the chest in the *upavīta* fashion or over the thighs in the *antariya* (lower garment) fashion, mostly in the case of male deities and sometimes as the *stanottariya* (covering for the breasts) of goddesses, is peculiar to the Pāla sculpture of Bengal (fig. 20, a), where the finest Dacca muslin, the most coveted cloth for aristocratic use, was produced until recently.

Sometimes local peculiarities travelled from one area to another. An example of this is the special type of late Pallava sculptures found in Kāveripākkam (North Arcot District), where many Chālukyan influences may be noticed in the local style. Thus the thick roll of *yajñopavīta* with flowers, especially large lilies, at regular intervals running over the right arm of the Pallava *dvārapālas* (fig. 21, a) from Kāveripākkam is typical of early Chālukyan sculptures, as in the colossal inscribed figure of a *dvārapāla* from Vijayawāḍa (Krishnā District) (fig. 21, b), executed by a sculptor in the court of the early Eastern Chālukyan kings of Veṅgi. The intricately-worked ornamentation and special pearl-decorations are all reminiscent of the Chālukyan style. This influence is accounted for by the Rāshtrakūṭa inroads into Pallava territory during the time of the last kings of the dynasty, and the evidence of influence in art and architecture in places like Kāveripākkam lend additional support to the epigraphical evidence for the military conquests.

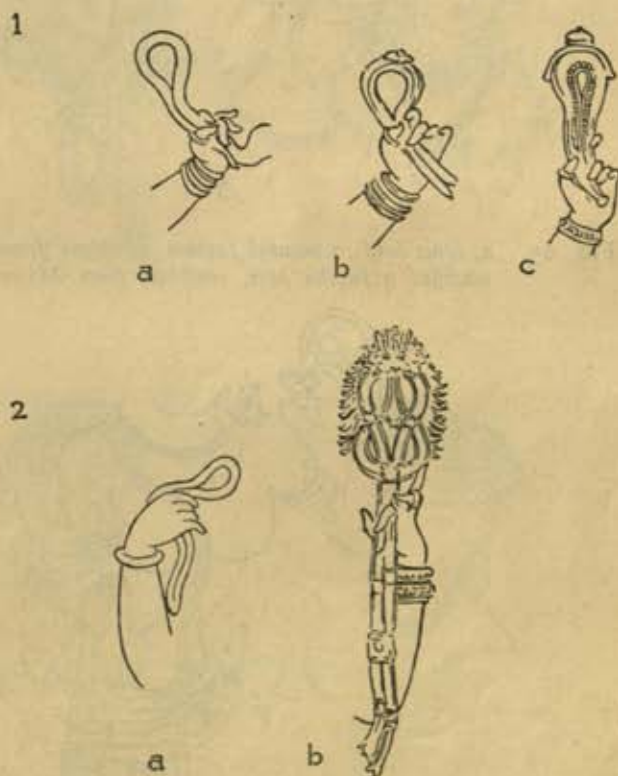
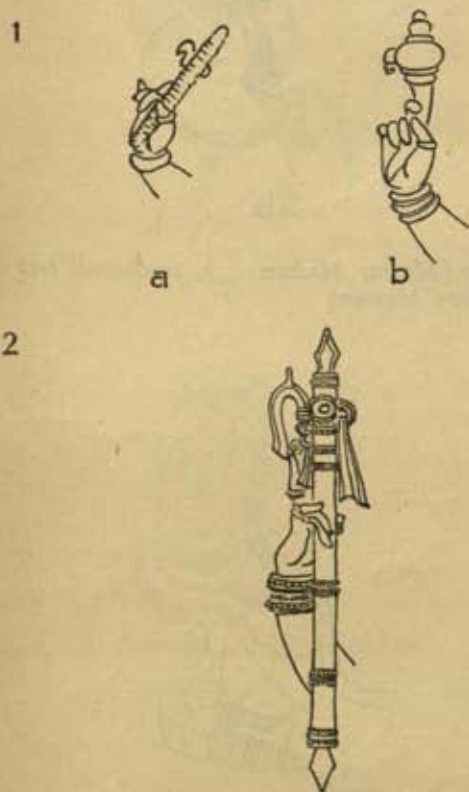


FIG. 23. Forms of *ankusa* : 1, a, bronze in Madras Museum, b, sculpture from Rāmeśvaram ; 2, sculpture from Halebid

FIG. 24. Forms of *pāśa* : 1, a-c, bronzes from Tamil area ; 2, a, sculpture from Aihole, b, sculpture from Halebid

While weapons are carried in Pallava and early Chola sculptures in a natural way and the weapons themselves are realistically represented (fig. 22, *a*), in later sculptures they are carried between the first two fingers in the *kartarimukha* pose (fig. 22, *b*) and are conventionalized and deformed beyond recognition. Thus the *ankuśa* (goad) and *pāśa* (noose) in early sculptures are true pictures of an elephant-goad (fig. 23, 1 *a* and 2) and a noose mostly a serpent-noose (fig. 24, 1 *a-b* and 2 *a*), but in later sculptures the goad becomes an unrecognizable barrel-shaped object (fig. 23, 1 *b*) and the noose looks anything but what it is intended to be (fig. 24, 1 *c* and 2 *b*). In Chālukyan and Hoysala



FIG. 25. *a*, lotus held in natural fashion, sculpture from Bijāpur (Madras Museum) ; *b*, conch-shell held in modified tripatāka pose, sculpture from Mysore (Madras Museum)

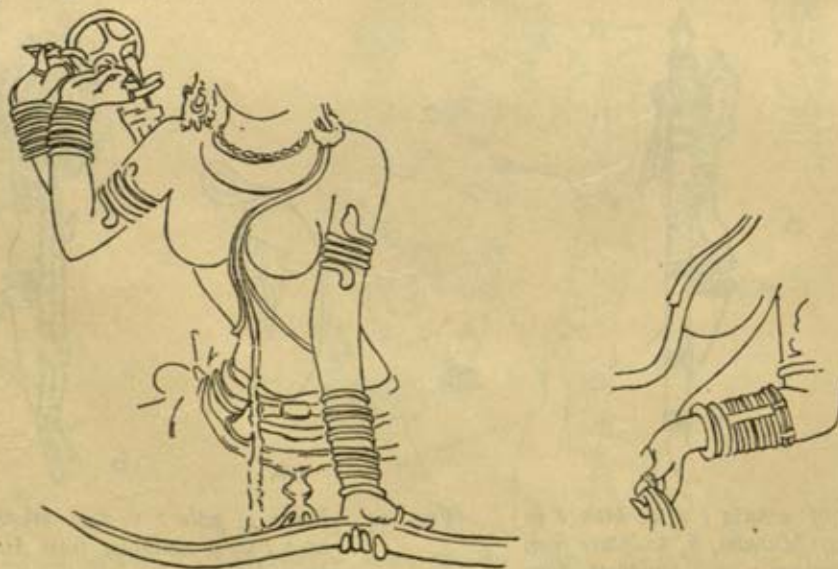


FIG. 26. Multiple wristlets without and with cross-band, sculptures respectively in Madras and Indian Museums

sculptures the weapons that were originally carried in a natural manner in the earliest Western Chālukyan sculptures from Bādāmi, Aihole, etc., come to be carried in a peculiar pose of the hand which looks like a modified form of *tripatāka* (fig. 25, b). This peculiar mode of the hand is found in other late medieval North Indian sculptures as well, as in Gujarat, Rajasthan, central India, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal and is particularly marked in the upper pair of hands. But in almost all sculptures except those from the Chālukyan area and Gujarat, the decorated and peculiarly-elongated tail-ornament of the weapons is absent. The elongated decorative tail-ends of weapons are one of the chief characteristics of Hoysala sculpture. The decorative pearl-ornamentation and chubby figures are the distinguishing traits of late Chālukyan and Hoysala sculptures which also show the longest and most decorated *yajñopavīta* and *udara-bandha*, beautifully pearl-set necklets, similarly rich crowns, elaborately worked *kaṭisūtra* and wristlets and anklets composed of many rings sometimes united by common cross-bands (fig. 26). Such

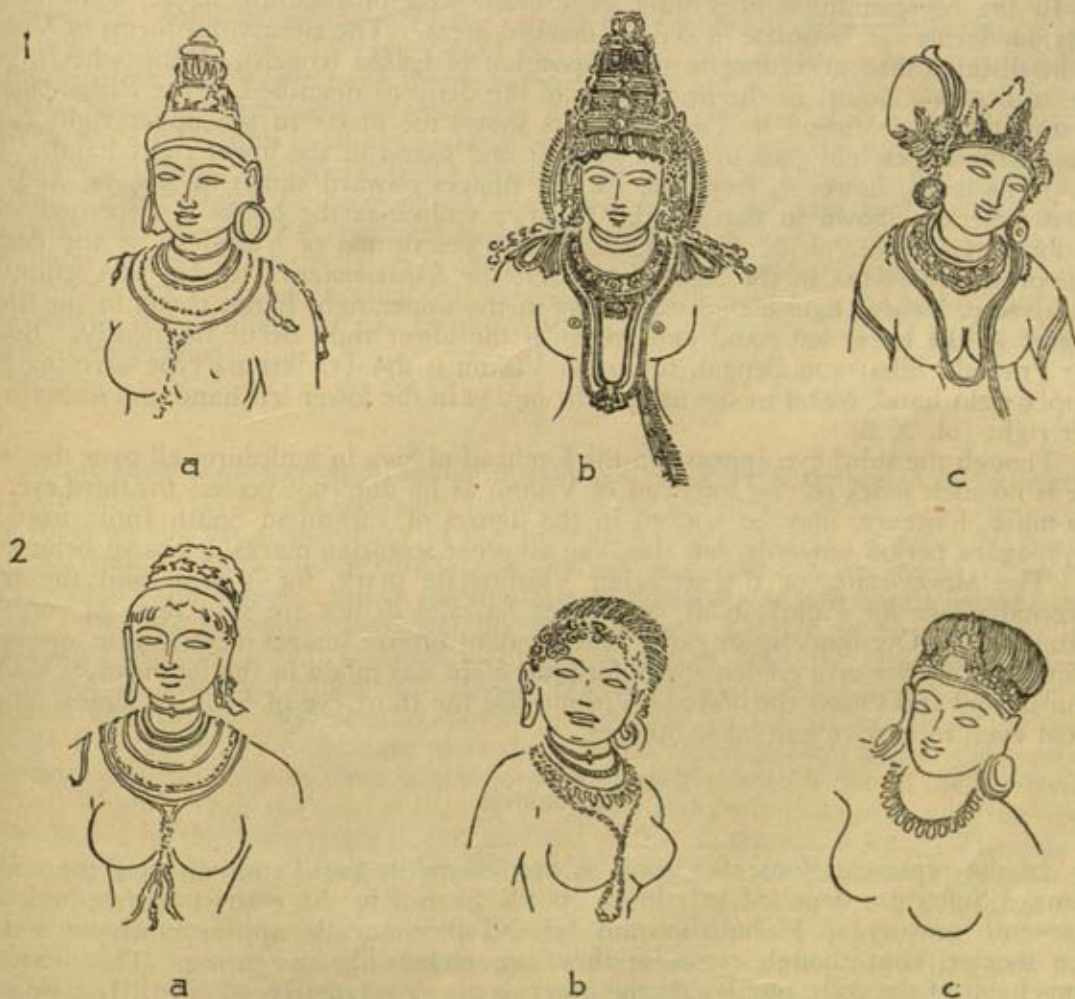


FIG. 27. 1, Forms of mukuta (crown) : a, karaṇḍa, bronze in Madras Museum, b, ratna, sculpture from Halebid, c, mukuta-cum-dhammilla, sculpture in Indian Museum ; 2, forms of dhammilla (ornamental coiffure) : a-b, sculptures in Madras Museum, c, sculpture in Indian Museum

profuse ornamentation, absent elsewhere, is as peculiar to the Kanarese districts as the wavy marks of muslin cloth is to the Pāla sculptures of Bengal (above, p. 37). The *karanda-mukūṭa* is the favourite head-dress for goddesses in the Tamil area (fig. 27, 1 a). In Chālukyan sculptures the crown is a rich and elaborate one (fig. 27, 1 b); a new type of head-dress from Bengal is illustrated in fig. 27, 1 c. The *keśa-bandha* or *dhammilla*, of the same type as in some South Indian images of goddesses like Sītā, Rukmiṇī and Satyabhāmā (fig. 27, 2 a-b), is found in some Bengal representations of goddesses, specially Manasā (fig. 27, 2 c).

VISHṆU

Standing figures

In the representation of Vishṇu as a *sthāna-mūrti* or standing figure, some of the twentyfour forms are favourite in certain marked areas. The twentyfour forms of Vishṇu may be distinguished according to the disposition of *śaṅkha* (conch), *chakra* (wheel), *gadā* (club) and *padma* (lotus) in the four hands of the deity as described in the *Padma-purāṇa*. The usual form of Vishṇu in Tamil districts shows the *chakra* in the upper right hand, *śaṅkha* in the upper left, *gadā* in the lower left and *padma* in the lower right hand. The lower right hand, however, from the earliest images onward shows an *abhaya*, and the lotus is generally shown in that hand. In later sculptures the *padma* is dispensed with. This form of Vishṇu (pl. X A) conforms to the description of Vāsudeva in the *Padma-purāṇa* or of Janārdana in the *Agni-purāṇa* and the *Rūpamaṇḍana*. In Hoysala sculptures from Mysore, Keśava figures showing *śaṅkha* in the upper right hand, *chakra* in the upper left, *gadā* in the lower left hand and *padma* in the lower right occur frequently. But in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Bengal, the usual Vishṇu is the Trivikrama type carrying *gadā* in upper right hand, *chakra* in the upper left, *śaṅkha* in the lower left hand and *padma* in the lower right (pl. X B).

Though the third eye appears on the forehead of Śiva in sculptures all over the land, there is no such mark on the forehead of Vishṇu as he does not possess the third eye. A *tilaka*-mark, however, may be noticed in the figures of Vishṇu in South India from the Vijayanagara period onwards, but this, like all other sectarian marks, is absent before that age. The *nāmam*-mark, or the sectarian Vaishṇavite mark, for Vishṇu and the triple horizontal stroke for Piṭāri (Kālī) and other Śaivaite deities are sure signs of very late workmanship. Occasionally in early South Indian bronze images a costly gem was set in the forehead of Śiva or a golden streak forming *tilaka* was inlaid in the forehead of Vishṇu. But in Bengal and Orissa the *tilaka* of Vishṇu, like the third eye of Śiva, is almost always present even in early medieval sculptures.

Seshaśāyin

In the representations of Vishṇu as Śeshaśāyin in the Tamil districts the coils of the snake Śesha are depicted lengthwise (pl. X C) but in the earliest representations of the seventh century at Mahābalipuram (pl. XI B) the coils appear crosswise and are hence shorter; but though crosswise they are coiled like a spring. This crosswise arrangement of the coils, one beside the other, is also a peculiarity of North Indian sculptures, a very early representation, of Gupta workmanship, being seen at Deogarh (pl. XI A). In the Aihole and other early Western Chālukyan sculptures and in medieval sculptures from Rajasthan the same tradition is followed.

Yoga-nārāyaṇa

Vishṇu as Yogeśvara or Yoga-nārāyaṇa, with his hands in *dhyāna* posture on his lap, answering to the description of Śiva in meditation given by Kālidāsa in his *Kumāra-sambhava* (III, 45), like the form of Śiva in *yoga* from Elephanta cave, is the Brāhmaṇical counterpart of similar representations of Dhyāni-Buddhas. Such Yoga-nārāyaṇa has his other two arms carrying his weapons. This form is popular in the Chāḷukyan area and also occurs in other parts of North India (pl. XII A and B).

Gajendra-moksha

Gajendra-moksha is not a common representation, but there are a few examples for comparative study. The earliest, from Deogarh, of the Gupta period, is a splendid example (pl. XII C). Here the Gajendra incident is shown with certain peculiar changes. The crocodile, popularly known to have caught the leg of the elephant, is absent and a Nāga is shown with its coils tight round the legs of the animal. In later medieval sculptures from Mysore the same theme is represented, but with the crocodile substituted for the Nāga. In Vijayanagara sculptures the popular version of the crocodile occurs. In all these cases Vishṇu is always rushing on Garuḍa to protect the afflicted animal that prayed for his help. In South India this form of Vishṇu is popularly known as Kari-varada ('the boon-giver to the elephant') or simply Varada or Varada-rāja. The famous temple of Varada-rāja in Kāñchīpuram is dedicated to this form of Vishṇu. The right lower hand of Vishṇu is here shown in the *varada* attitude. The representations of Varada-rāja in bronze are identified as such only by the position of the hand, the important feature of the story—the elephant caught by the crocodile that brought Varada to the scene of distress—being absent.

Trivikrama

In an early sculpture at Mahābalipuram (pl. XIII A) Trivikrama is represented with eight arms, with his left leg raised to measure the universe. Jāmbavat is represented above, beating the drum in ecstasy as the *Vaikhānasāgama* requires. Another representation, very similar to this and of comparable date, is that from the Bādāmi caves, and yet another one is from Ellora. But in slightly later medieval forms four hands became more popular. In most representations, whether in North (pl. XIII B) or South India, it is the left leg of the deity that is raised. In the sculptures from the Hoysala temples of Mysore, as from Belūr and Nuggahalli (Hasan District), Trivikrama is correctly represented, in consonance with the *Śilparatna*, as standing on the left leg and with his right leg raised (pl. XIII C). A feature to be noticed in the Hoysala representation is that the weapons of this deity are the same as those of the homonymous deity who is one of the twentyfour forms of Vishṇu. Thus the *gadā* is held in the upper right hand, the *chakra* in the upper left, the *padma* in the lower right hand, and the *śankha* in the lower left. This feature is also present in North Indian sculptures of the time. An excellent example showing similar weapons but with the left (instead of the right) leg raised is a Trivikrama from Bihar, in the Indian Museum, and from Abdullapur, in the Dacca Museum. In other dwarf forms of Vāmana, who is the same as Trivikrama, as in the case of the one from Purāpārā in the Dacca Museum, the same arrangement of weapons is present. This arrangement, essential when identifying Trivikrama among the twentyfour forms of Vishṇu, is however not strictly followed in all representations of Trivikrama with his leg raised; see, for instance, the sculpture from Joṛādeul in the Dacca Museum (pl. XIII D).

Varāha

The Varāha form of Vishṇu, like that of Narasimha and Trivikrama, was very popular in early medieval days and there are numerous representations all over India. Varāha is invoked at the beginning of many inscriptions of different dynasties. The representation of Varāha in therianthropomorphic form at Udayagiri in Gwalior (pl. XIV B), of Gupta date, is the most famous, and such representations abound all over India, the other classical examples being from one of the Bādāmi caves, from Mahābalipuram (pl. XIV A), from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Orissa, Bengal and Bihar. Zoomorphic representations of the deity are found side by side with the therianthropomorphic ones but they are confined to the north. The famous boars from Eran, District Jabalpur (pl. XIV C), and in the Gwalior and Lucknow Museums are all examples of the zoomorphic form; in this form deities representing the whole pantheon are carved all over the body of the animal. The southern limit of this type is Śrīkūrmam (Viśākhapatnam District), on the southern border of Orissa. But the normal area for the zoomorphic representation is Uttar Pradesh, central India and the part of Orissa bordering on Madhya Pradesh. Everywhere else it is the therianthropomorphic type that is found. But even where the zoomorphic type occurs, the other and more popular type exists side by side.

Another feature in early representations of Vishṇu, especially as Varāha, is that beneath his feet and adoring them is represented Śeṣha Nāga, therianthropomorphic in form, half-snake and half-man, issuing from the foam of the ocean. This is noticed at Udayagiri in Gwalior, at Bādāmi, at Mahābalipuram, at Rājim in Madhya Pradesh and other places. It is interesting to note that in the representation of Trivikrama from Rājim, Śeṣha Nāga is shown near the right foot of Vishṇu, a feature which occurs in early sculptures and, being unusual in later ones, helps in dating. It may be noted that the Nāga-element in the Varāha-Trivikrama forms is to indicate the Pātāla-loka, one of the three worlds covered by Trivikrama. This early device of depicting Pātāla may also be seen even on the reverse of the coins of Yajña Śātakarṇī and the Western Kshatrapas (second-third centuries).

Narasimha

In South India Narasimha is very popular, the early representations being of Pallava date. Narasimha is represented in large numbers in different ways in Tamil and Chālukyan sculptures—Narasimha in action and Narasimha in repose, Narasimha in meditation and Lakshmī-narasimha with his spouse—all forms are popular in South India. He is differently known as Sthaṇa-narasimha when depicted in the action of tearing out the entrails of Hiranyakaśipu, as Yoga-narasimha when seated in meditation (with either the full *yoga-paṭṭa* or the *ardhayoga-paṭṭa* bound round his legs like the *paryāṅka-granthi-bandha* of Dakṣiṇā-mūrti Śiva), as Kevala-narasimha when standing alone (a fine example of which comes from the Bādāmi cave) and as Lakshmī-narasimha where there is Lakshmī on his lap. A magnificent example, though of later date, is the mutilated sculpture from Hampi. In early medieval representation of Narasimha in the Deccan and South India the lion-face is natural (fig. 28, 1 a), but later, all over India, it is stylized (fig. 28, 1 b, 2 a-b and 3 a-b). In all North Indian sculptures of Narasimha, whether from central India or from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal or Orissa, Narasimha is represented as dancing with his left leg slightly raised and bent in what is known in Buddhist iconographic parlance as *ardha-paryāṅka*, and he is represented as tearing the stomach and pulling



A. Vishnu as Vāsudeva with consorts, from Peruntottam, Tanjore
(Madras Museum)



C. Seshasāyīn, from Hampi, Bellary



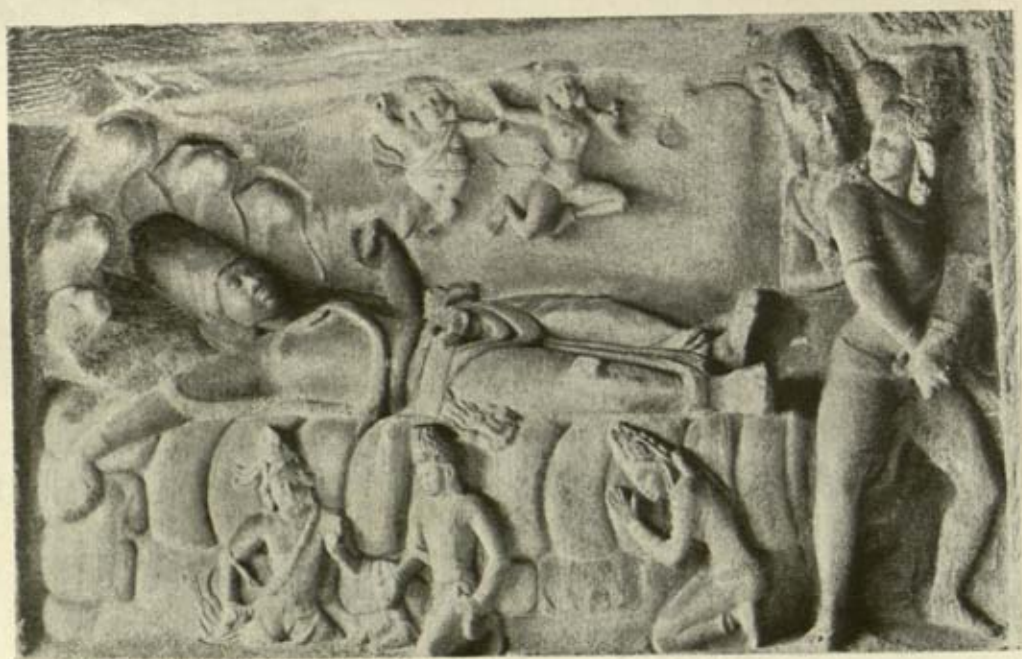
B. Vishnu as Trivikrama with consorts, from
Sundarban, 24 Parganas
(Indian Museum)

42 A

5



A



B

Seshashayin: A, from Deogarh, Jhānsi; B, from Mahābalipuram, Chingleput



A

Yoganārāyaṇa: A, from Mathurā (Mathurā Museum); B, from Huvinahadāhalli, Bellary



B



C. *Gajendra-moksha*, from Deogarh, Jhānsī



A



C



B



D

Trivikrama: A, from Mahābalipuram, Chingleput; B, from Rājim, Raipur; C, from Nuggehalli, Mysore; D, from Jorādeul, Dacca (Dacca Museum)



A

49 E



B



C

Varāha: A (therianthropomorphic), from Mahābalipuram, Chingleput; B (same), from Udayagiri, Gwalior; C (zoomorphic), from Eran, Sāgar



A



B



C

Śrīvatsa mark: A, in panel, from Peddamuḍiyam (Madras Museum); B, on chest of Tīrthaṅkara, from Mathurā (Mathurā Museum); C, mark absent on chest of Tīrthaṅkara, from Bānkurā (Indian Museum)



A



B



C



D

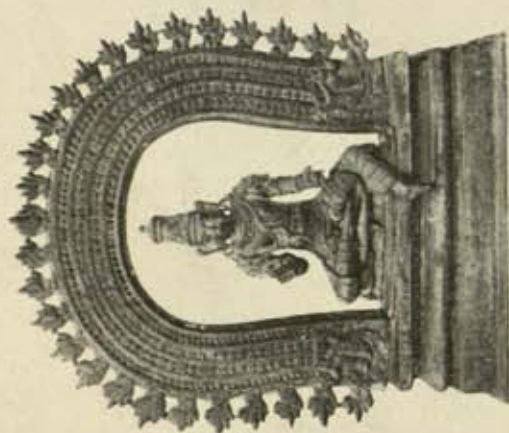
Śrīvatsa mark: A, mark absent on chest of Vishṇu (Madras Museum); B, mark present on chest of Vishṇu, from Komal, Tanjore (Madras Museum); C, mark absent on chest of Vishṇu as Janārdana, from Somnāthpur, Mysore; D, on chest of Tīrthāṅkara, from Karanbel, Jabalpur

2



B

A



C

A and B, *Vaiṣṇavānti-mālā* of Viṣṇu, respectively from Komal, Tanjore (Madras Museum) and Bengal (Indian Museum);
C, *gadā* and *śaṅkha* in *Hṛṣīkeśa*, from Sāgarāṭṭī, Murshidābād (Varāṅgīya Sāhiya Parishad Museum)

out the entrails of Hiranyakaśipu. This is the *sthaṇa* form of Narasimha and is the only one known in these parts.

1



2



3



FIG. 28. Forms of Narasimha : 1, a, from Bādāmi, b, from Bellary ; 2, a, bronze in Madras Museum, b, sculpture from Hampi ; 3, a, sculpture in Indian Museum, b, sculpture in Rājshāhī Museum

The śrīvatsa symbol

On the chest of representations of Viṣṇu appears a mark which is known as the *śrīvatsa*, a very ancient symbol. *Śrīvatsa* the mark, *kaustubha* the gem, and *vaijayanti-mālā* the garland of flowers—these three are special decorations of Viṣṇu. The *śrīvatsa* distinguishes Viṣṇu as one possessing a special mark of beauty and fortune—*śrīvatsa* being the symbol of the goddess of fortune, *Śrī*,—and as Puruṣhottama, the most illustrious one. This mark, peculiar to Viṣṇu in medieval sculptures, is, however, lacking in most of the Gupta representations, though the symbol is associated with Viṣṇu even in early

1

2

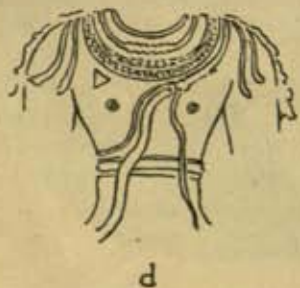
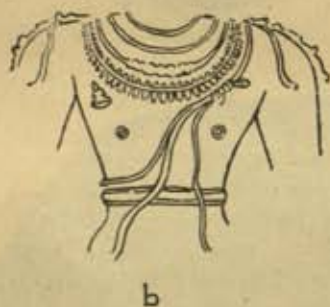


FIG. 29. Forms of śrīvatsa : 1, on the chest of Viṣṇu, a, from Udayagiri cave, b and d, bronzes in Madras Museum, c, sculpture from U.P. ; 2, on the chest of Tirthāṅkara, a, from Mathurā, b, from Karanbel

literature. It occurs as a mark of *mahāpuruṣa* ('a great person') on the chest of the Jaina Tirthaṅkaras in Kushan sculptures from Mathurā (fig. 29, 2 a). Though other auspicious marks are found on the body of Buddha, the *śrīvatsa* mark is absent from his chest owing to the fact that it is covered by a cloak; but it occurs freely in Buddhist sculptures in different contexts.

The symbol has undergone a change in shape during the centuries.¹ The earliest type is either a vertical line with an S-shaped curve to the left and a symmetrical curve to the right or a vertical line cutting two crescents at its base and at its middle (fig. 29, 1 a). In the medieval sculptures of North India, especially Uttar Pradesh, it changes into a lozenge-shaped four-petalled flower, the side-petals shorter and broader and the top and bottom ones slightly longer (fig. 29, 1 c). In South India the early specimens have exactly the same shape as in Kushan sculptures, as is frequently seen in Amarāvati sculptures. In the Pallava period the symbol still retains its early shape and a small bronze from Enādi (Tanjore District), preserved in the Madras Museum, indicates the association of the symbol with a seated Lakshmi. The curled hands and legs and the crowned head and trunk suggest a semi-symbolic figure of seated Lakshmi. This symbol, which should normally be expected in the earliest Pallava sculptures in South India as adorning the chest of Vishṇu, is actually absent there (pl. XVI A); the larger and imposing sculptures from Mahābalipuram, Kīlmāvilangai (Chingleput District) and elsewhere lack it.

The Madras Museum collection of bronzes from South India contains some figures representing Vishṇu which are specially important for the study of the evolution of the *śrīvatsa*-mark in South India. The mark as found on the chest of the earlier ones approaches the early symbol to a certain extent and is still suggestive of the origin (fig. 29, 1 b), but there is also the tendency for the symbol to become triangular in form, in which shape it is finally seen in the Vijayanagara period² (fig. 29, 1 d). In early Chōla bronzes, such as the Vishṇu with Śrī and Bhūdevī (no. 1 from Peruntoṭṭam, Tanjore District) and Vishṇu as Śrīnivāsa, also with Śrī and Bhūdevī (no. 2 from Vaḍakkupaniyūr), the *śrīvatsa* symbol is nearer the earlier symbol, of which the semi-symbolic Lakshmi referred to above is a close parallel and derivative. In late Chōla bronzes, like Varadarāja no. 1 with Śrī and Bhūdevī from Tiruppuvanam, Vishṇu no. 7 from Paṇḍarāvāḍai, Vishṇu no. 10 from Komal (all in Tanjore District), and Vishṇu as Vaikunṭhanātha, again with Śrī and Bhūdevī, from Polagam (Tanjore District), this mark is clearer still. In the case of Varadarāja no. 1 from Tiruppuvanam the mark is somewhat like a vertically elongate rectangle with conical top, suggesting a shrine for Śrī, but in Vishṇu no. 10 from Komal, showing seated Lakshmi, the representation of the mark is the clearest, the figure composing a triangle (pl. XVI B). In the Vijayanagara bronzes of Vishṇu, as Śrīnivāsa no. 4 with Śrī and Bhūdevī, the triangle represents the *śrīvatsa*-mark, and this is the last phase in the development of the symbol in South India, as henceforth the symbol is represented only by a triangle. A representation of the late Chōla phase of the *śrīvatsa* development may be seen in the seated triangular image of Lakshmi on the chest of the green monolithic sculpture representing Vishṇu as Śayana-mūrti near a tank at lower Tirupati (Chittoor District), where a number of such sculptures carved of the same fine-grained stone of pleasing colour are arranged around the margin.

But the presence of the early type of *śrīvatsa*-symbol as a semi-symbolic seated Lakshmi in the late Pallava bronze already referred to above is not a solitary instance.

¹ C. Sivaramamurti, 'Goddess Lakshmi and her symbols', *Journal of U.P. Historical Society*, XIV (1941), pp. 21-24.

² F. H. Gravely and T. N. Ramachandran, *Catalogue of South Indian Hindu Metal Images in the Madras Government Museum* (Madras, 1932), p. 28.

It has a history behind it. The absence of the *śrīvatsa* mark on the chest of Viṣṇu in the sculpture at Mahābalipuram does not prove anything particular. Here it is only another instance of the similarity between early Eastern Chāḷukyan and early Pallava sculpture, seen not only in the lack of *śrīvatsa*-mark on the chest of Viṣṇu, but in the heaviness of the limbs, the thick roll-like *yajñopavīta* going over the right arm and the weapons being held in a natural way. This absence of the mark on Viṣṇu's chest in Western Chāḷukyan sculptures (pl. XVI C) follows the earlier Gupta tradition.

Among the ancient finds in Peddamudiyam (Cuddapah District), there are some archaic sculptures that suggest a pre-Pallava date. The deities here represented are among the earliest known to South Indian Hindu iconography as also the most popular at that time. Gaṇeśa occurs here with only a single pair of arms as also Brahmā, Narasimha, Viṣṇu and Devī. Both Śivaliṅga and Somāskanda with the bull occur here. Śrī or Lakṣmī appears in her semi-symbolic form, as also Mahiṣamardini. The *śrīvatsa* symbol here explains the origin of the later Pallava figure and constitutes the link between the symbol as it is represented in late Amarāvati and in Pallava sculptures (pl. XV A).

Strangely enough, the Gupta tradition seems to have ignored this symbol altogether, and the chest of Viṣṇu is almost always shown bare, though there are rare instances, as the one from Udayagiri, of Gupta Viṣṇu with this mark (pl. XVIII D). This tradition is followed in Chāḷukyan and Hoysala sculptures (pl. XVI C), but in Madhya Pradesh, though the mark is absent in the earlier medieval sculpture such as the figure of Trivikrama from Rājim (Raipur District) (pl. XIII B), it is found in later sculptures like the Haihaya carvings from Tripurī and in the Śeṣhaśāyin from Sohāgpur. In Madhya Pradesh, medieval sculpture is characterized by the presence of the four-petalled, vertically elongate variety of the mark on Viṣṇu's chest. Generally the mark is distinct but sometimes there is a tendency for it to appear like a pendant to the lowest necklet. It may here be remarked that while the *śrīvatsa*-mark is on the right chest of Viṣṇu, as it correctly ought to be, in South Indian medieval sculptures, it is exactly at the centre of the chest in North Indian ones and thus naturally tends to fuse with the necklets and with the *kaustubha*-decoration.

In Bengal the Gupta tradition persists and the *śrīvatsa* is generally absent from Viṣṇu's chest, the exceptions being the bronze image from Kumārpur (Rājshāhi District), the Varāha from the temple at Rānihāṭī and the Narasimha from Tāngibāṭī (both in Dacca District). Though the *śrīvatsa*-mark is thus very rare, the *kaustubha*, as a pendant from the necklet, is sometimes found. This pendant is shaped more or less like a cross consisting of four petals, the lower one rectangular with corners pointing to the cardinal points as in the *śrīvatsa*. This marks the fusion of the *śrīvatsa* with the *kaustubha*. Occasionally, as in the Viṣṇu figure from Sāgardighī (Mūrshidābād District), the pendant is circular. Following this tradition, Tirthaṅkara images of the medieval period in Bengal lack the *śrīvatsa* mark on the chest, though elsewhere in North India it is present both in Tirthaṅkara (fig. 29, 2 b) and in Viṣṇu images (fig. 29, 1 c). In South India, medieval sculptures of Viṣṇu have the mark, though the Tirthaṅkaras lack it.

To sum up, while the mark is present on the chest of Tirthaṅkaras in very early North Indian sculptures (pl. XV B), it is generally absent from that of Viṣṇu, and, while it is present on the chest of Viṣṇu in South Indian Tamil medieval sculpture, it is absent there from the chest of the Tirthaṅkara. It is present in North Indian medieval sculptures (pl. XVI D) except in Bengal, where it is occasionally present on the chest of Viṣṇu but never on that of the Tirthaṅkara (pl. XV C).

Other attributes of Vishṇu

Vaijayantī-mālā. The *vaijayantī-mālā* is another decoration special to Vishṇu, very prominent in northern, central and eastern sculptures (pl. XVII B). It is a long garland full of decorative work encircling the back of the figure and running inward from over both the arms, to trail like an *uttariya* with both ends joined. Though this is an essential decorative feature of Vishṇu in sculptures north of the Deccan, it is usually absent in

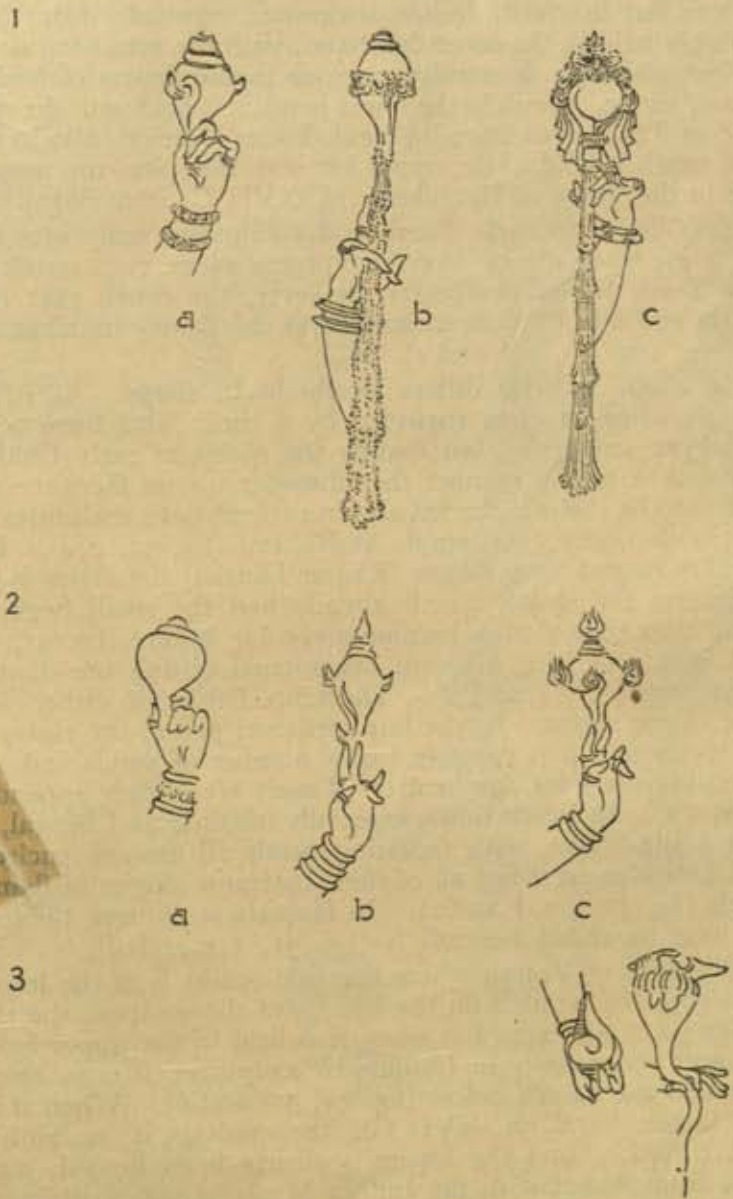


Fig. 30. Attributes of Vishṇu—conch : 1, Chālukyan tradition, a, from Bādāmi b, from Bāgali, c, from Belūr ; 2, Tamil tradition, a, from Mahābalipuram, b and c, bronzes in Madras Museum ; 3, North Indian tradition, from Bengal

South Indian sculptures and is entirely discarded in Tamil sculptures except in rare cases like the metal image of the seated Vishṇu with Śrī and Bhūdevī, no. 17 in the Madras Museum (pl. XVII A). Though it occurs sometimes in Chālukyan sculptures and in Hoysala sculptures which are in the Chālukyan tradition, it is not an invariable feature and in any case lacks the prominence accorded to it in the north.

Śaṅkha. The *śaṅkha* (conch) in South Indian and Chālukyan sculptures, whether held in the upper hands or in the lower, is always represented with the spiral top upwards (fig. 30, 1 and 2). But in North Indian sculptures, especially from Bengal and Bihar, it is almost invariably held in the lower left hand, with the spiral top downwards (fig. 30, 3). Deviations from this rule do rarely occur, as in the figures of Vishṇu as Matsya in the Dacca Museum, where, though in the lower hand, it is held with the spiral top upwards, and in the figure of Trivikrama from Joṛādeul (Dacca District), also in the same Museum (pl. XIII D), the conch is held in the upper left with the spiral top upwards; or it is laid flat on a lotus as in the figure of Hṛishikeśa (pl. XVII C) from Sāgardīghī (fig. 30, 3 d).

The conch of Vishṇu in early Tamil and Chālukyan sculptures has a small flame about it (fig. 30, 1 a), especially in Tamil sculptures where even tassels are added in the latest phase. In North Indian sculptures, however, the conch ever remains a natural thing. In Hoysala and late Chālukyan sculptures the flame-ornament and a long tassel-tail are alike present (fig. 30, 1 b and c).

Chakra. The *chakra* (wheel) differs locally in its shape. At Aihole it somewhat resembles a potter's wheel, a cross encircled by a rim. This form occurs also in some other early Chālukyan sculptures, but mainly the *chakra* in early Chālukyan renderings is a solid disc carried in such a manner that the edge almost faces the spectator (fig. 31, 1 b). In this position the *chakra* is carried also in early Pallava sculptures where it is similar in shape to that in the early cave-temple at Bādāmi (fig. 31, 2 a). Even in Madhya Pradesh as in the Trivikrama from Rājim (Raipur District) the *chakra* is not different. In late Pallava sculptures the *chakra*, which already had the small beginnings of flames, develops them and later these flames become a regular feature (fig. 31, 2 b and c). In a slightly modified form and in a different ornamental setting the flames exist even in Hoysala sculptures (fig. 31, 1 c and d). There are flames on either side on top, below and at the centre of the *chakra*. In the late medieval period the *chakra* is represented as flatly facing the spectator; it is composed of a number of petals and a marginal circle, with flames decorating the sides and centre. Tassels are further appendages in very late sculptures (fig. 31, 1 d). In North India, especially in Bihar and Bengal, it is so decorated that it looks like a sun-flower, with radiating petals all around encircled by a band. From the central hub of most if not all of these *chakras* a tongue of flame issues sinuously and darts upwards (fig. 31, 3 a, b and c). In Hoysala sculptures, the *chakra*, like all other weapons, has a long tassel-tail beneath it (fig. 31, 1 c and d).

Gadā. In all forms of Vishṇu where the *gadā* (club) is in the lower hand it is held in such a manner that the hand is on the handle of the weapon, the thicker end resting on the ground (fig. 32, 1 and 2). But when it is held in the upper hand, as it is mostly in North Indian and occasionally in Chālukyan sculptures, it is so held that the thicker end is uppermost and the handle below (fig. 32, 3 a and b). When it rests horizontally on a flower held in the hand (pl. XVII C), the position is certainly due to the local Tantric Buddhist tradition, and the image is clearly from Bengal, e.g., the bronze representing Vishṇu from Rangpur in the Indian Museum and Hṛishikeśa from Sāgardīghī (Mūrshidābād District), now in the Vaṅgiya Sāhitya Parishad Museum (fig. 32, 3 c).

The *gadā* in early South Indian Pallava sculptures is a heavy long barrel-like thing with a clumsy handle (fig. 32, 2 a), but in early Chola sculptures it is slender with a number

of horizontal bands and is slightly thicker towards the lower end (fig. 32, 2 *b*). In Chālukyan sculptures this lower end is composed of a number of vertical bands with a star-shaped cross-section. This type of club appears in the earliest sculptures at Bādāmi (fig. 32, 1 *b*) and continues in late medieval Chālukyan (fig. 32, 1 *c*) and Hoysala sculptures (fig. 32, 1 *d*). But in later sculptures the tendency is to emphasize these ribs. The *gadā* of Trivikrama from Rājim in Madhya Pradesh is a big rough club with the decoration of an entwined creeper. In sculptures from Bihar and Bengal it is shaped more or less like a flute, solid in section, both ends being decorated with a bulbous ribbed cushion, the top one for the handle and the lower one, which is slightly larger, for the mace-head. This is decorated with a plume-like ornament, decorative like the creeper-design (fig. 32, 3 *b*).

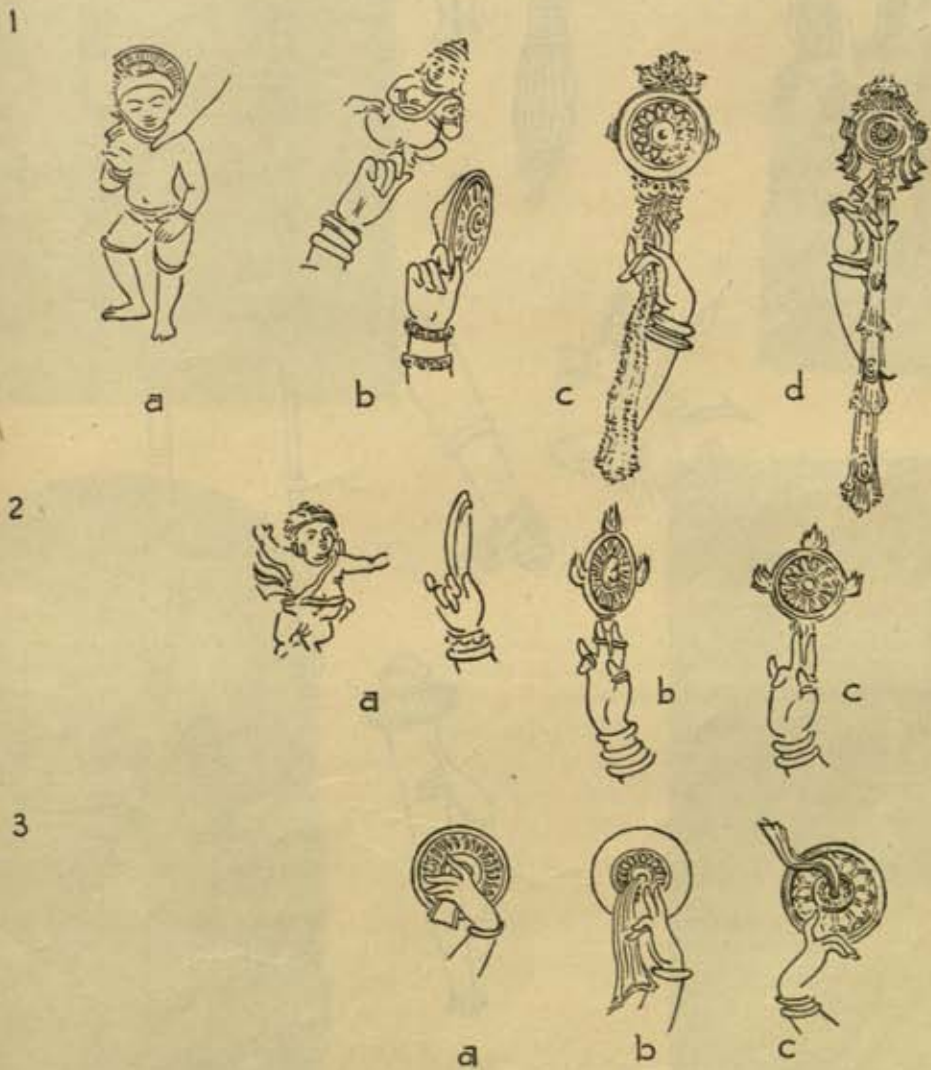


FIG. 31. Attributes of Vishnu—wheel : 1, a, Gupta, from Rājgir, b-d, Chālukyan respectively from Bādāmi, Bāgali and Helebid; 2, Tamil, a, from Mahābalipuram, b-c, bronzes in Madras Museum; 3, North Indian, a, from Rajasthan, b, from Bihar, c, from Bengal

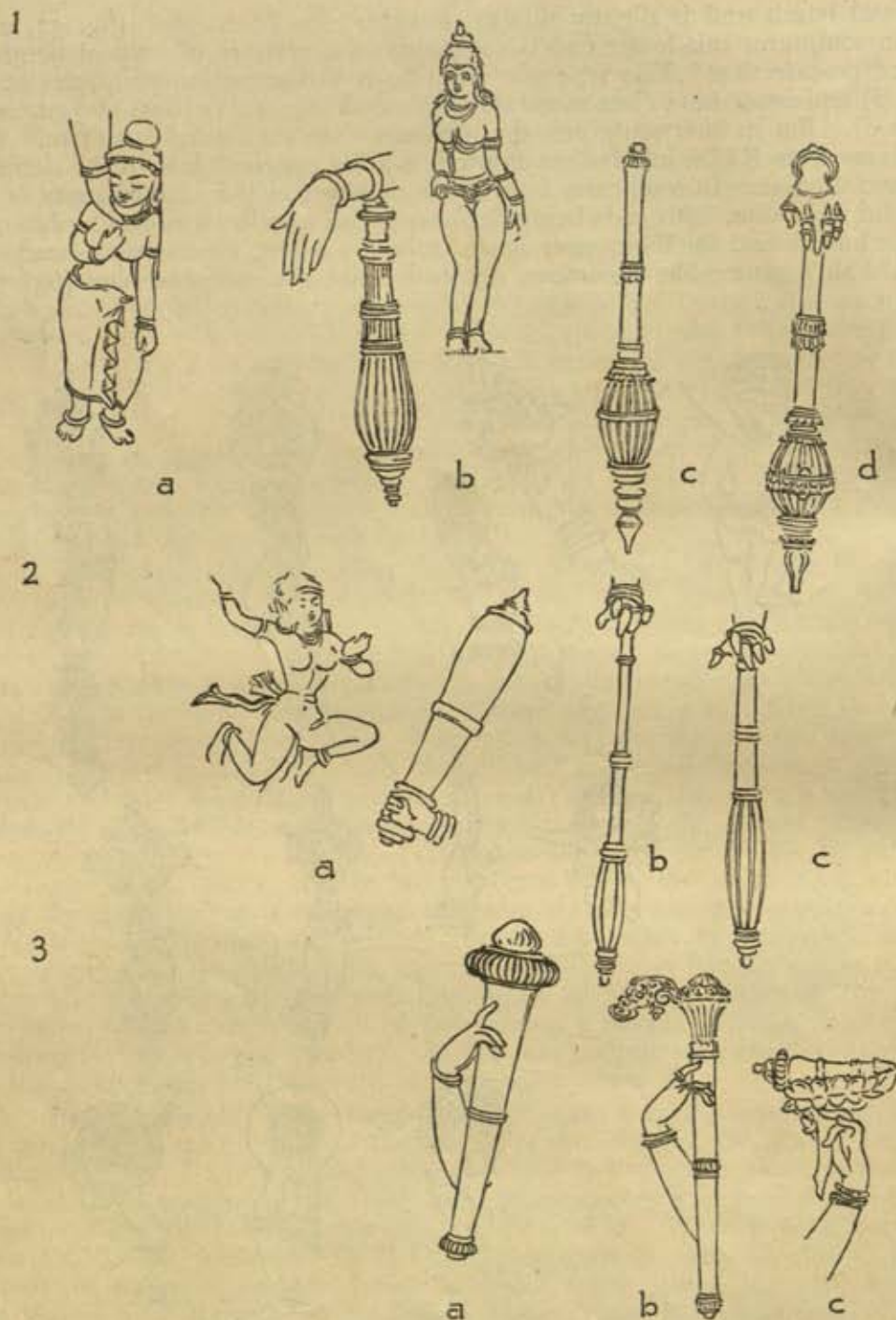


FIG. 32. Attributes of Vishnu—club : 1, a, Gupta, from Rājgir, b-d, Chālukyan, respectively from Bādāmi, Bāgali and Halebid ; 2, Tamil, a, from Mahābalipuram, b-c, bronzes in Madras Museum ; 3, North Indian, a, from Rajasthan, b-c, from Bengal



A



B



C



D

A, B and C, āyudha-purushas of Viṣṇu, respectively from Rājgir, Chaitanpur (Indian Museum) and Bihar (Indian Museum); D, śrīvatsa-mark on chest of Viṣṇu, from Udayagiri



A



B



C

A and B, Śiva with the third eye, respectively from Kosam, Allahabad (Indian Museum) and Mandasor, Gwalior; C, Kalyāṇasundara from Chhāṭingrām, Bōgrā (Rājshāhī Museum)



A



B

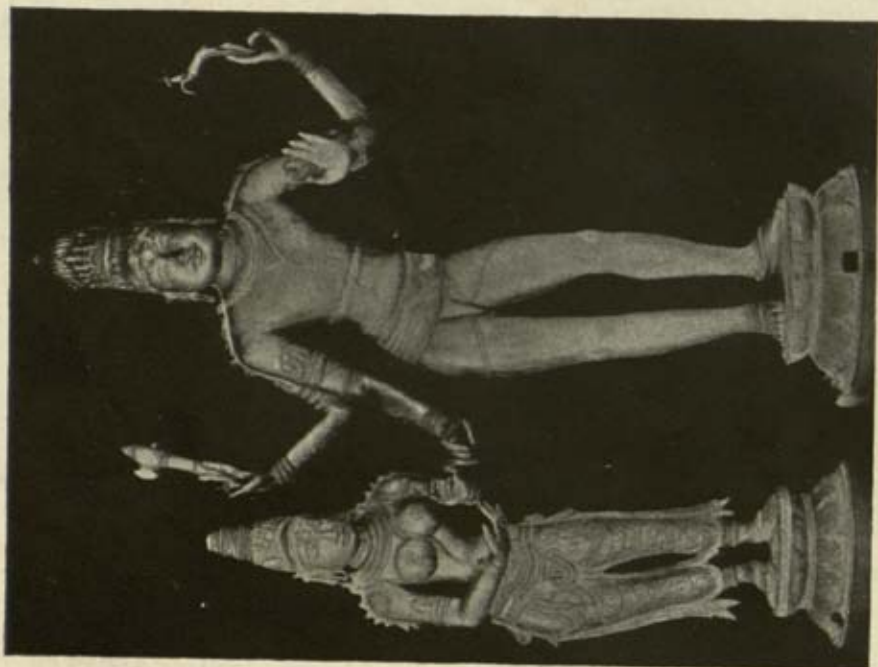


C

*Ardhanārīśvara: A, from Mahabalipurām, Chingleput; B, from Tiruvirāmkūrām, Tanjore;
C, from Purāpāra, Dacca (Rajshahi Museum)*

50 G

20



B



A

Kalyāṇasundara; A, from Elephanta; B, from Tiruvotiyur (Chingleput)

In Gujarat and Rajasthan (fig. 32, 3a) the Chālukyan type is slightly modified and the long ribbed lower end becomes compressed and bulges into a bulbous ribbed shape. The same type also occurs in Uttar Pradesh, as is to be seen in the image of Vishṇu in the Mathurā Museum (pl. XII A).

Padma. The *padma* (lotus) of Vishṇu is naturalistic in the earliest Pallava sculptures of South India, but it occurs very rarely, being just shown on the palm held in *abhaya*; usually it is omitted. In early Chālukyan sculptures it is completely absent, but in the late ones it occurs prominently in a highly stylized form, and with long stalk decorated with tassels, like the weapons. In some of the early Chālukyan figures, however, the lotus is represented as a small bud which may be mistaken for a fruit. In sculptures from Bihar and Bengal a full-blown lotus is shown just beneath the hand of Vishṇu, and on the palm itself is a smaller flower, while, to balance the larger one, another one is similarly placed on the other side. The lotus signifies water, and its presence near the conch is appropriate.

Āyudha-purushas. In a Gupta image from Rājgir (pl. XVIII A) there is the representation of standing Vishṇu wearing the *kiriṭa* and a long *yajñopavīta* which serves as the *vana-mālā* as well. He has four hands, two of which are broken, and the other two rest on the shoulders of personified figures of Sudarśana-*chakra* to the right and Kaumodakī-*gadā* to the left. This is an early feature, and even in early medieval sculptures, where earlier Gupta traditions linger, Vishṇu is represented as surrounded by *āyudha-purushas*. In the panel of Śeṣhaśāyī-Vishṇu from Deogarh (pl. XI A), four *āyudha-purushas* of Vishṇu are represented below his serpent-conch, one of whom is attacking the demons Madhu and Kaiṭabha and the others are only watching. The last two are the *chakra* and *gadā*. In other sculptures of early date, such as those from Kākadighī, Lakshmankāṭi in the Dacca Museum and Chaitanpur in the Indian Museum (pl. XVIII B) and some from Bihar (pl. XVIII C) and a bronze figure from Kumārpur (Rājshāhī District) in the Rājshāhī Museum, the *āyudha-purushas* are similarly represented. It is especially to be noted that the *gadā* and *chakra* as *āyudha-purushas* are the favourites, and in all these sculptures except that from Lakshmankāṭi the type is exactly like that from Rājgir (fig. 31, 1 a and 32, 1 a), all these pointing to early tradition and workmanship.

Representations of the *āyudha-purushas* in anthropomorphic form are also found in very early sculptures from the Deccan and South India, but they are rare. In the sculpture of Narasiṃha from Bādāmi, personified *śaṅkha* and *chakra* (fig. 31, 1 b) are shown fluttering above the hands intended to hold them, *gadā-devī* is shown beside one of them (fig. 32, 1 b), and *padma* is a dwarf near Narasiṃha's feet. In the representation of Śeṣhaśāyīn at Mahābalipuram in the Mahishamardinī cave, Sudarśana-*chakra* (fig. 31, 2 a) and Kaumodakī-*gadā* (fig. 32, 2 a) are both shown, the former as a dwarf and the latter as a damsel flying to meet Madhu and Kaiṭabha. Two rare bronzes of early Chōla workmanship recently acquired by the Madras Museum represent the wheel and club of Vishṇu in anthropomorphic form, the wheel and club being shown actually on the head. It is strange that the *gadā* is here represented as a man and not a woman. Except for this anthropomorphic representations of the *āyudhas* of Vishṇu do not occur after the seventh-eighth centuries.

ŚIVA

Weapons and attributes

Śūla. With the exception of a few early Pallava sculptures where Śiva is represented as carrying the *śūla* (trident) this weapon is absent from his hand in all South Indian

representations of the deity, and the axe and the deer are invariably held in his upper hands (fig. 33, *a*). On the other hand the *śūla* and snake are usually the distinguishing characteristics of Śiva in northern sculpture and the Chālukyan areas of the Deccan (fig. 33, *b*).



FIG. 33. Attributes of Śiva : *a*, South Indian tradition, carrying axe and deer ; *b*, North Indian tradition, carrying trident and snake

The *śūla* itself differs in shape according to its locality and age. In the Chālukyan area and North India it has a double curve for the two outer prongs and is more open, and, in the earlier specimens, there is a small *pīṭha* (seat) for the *śūla* whence the long handle starts (fig. 34, 2 *a*). This is elaborated in later Chālukyan and Hoysala work (fig. 34, 2 *b* and *c*). The *śūla* in Pallava sculptures on the other hand is almost circular in contour, its outer prongs being fully curved whilst the long central prong projects upwards the whole resting on a *pīṭha* at the point of the handle (fig. 34, 1 *a*). The shape is somewhat modified in the Chola *śūla*, where the central prong is definitely shorter and of normal height (fig. 34, 1 *b*) ; in later sculptures the contour of the outer prongs becomes less circular and more open and elongated, the *pīṭha* being negligible (fig. 34, 1 *c*). In Bengal the *śūla* held by Devī is peculiar, resembling a three-pronged branch of a tree cut and shaped into a *śūla*.

Paraśu. Similarly, the *paraśu* (axe) of Śiva, which is represented in its true and natural form in Pallava sculptures (fig. 35, 1 *a*), sometimes with even the thong with which the blade is tied to the wooden handle (as in the primitive type)—the true *khaṇḍa-paraśu* of Śiva (fig. 35, 1 *b*)—changes into a cumbersome barrel-shaped object (fig. 35, 1 *c*), like the goad in later sculptures, although in Chālukyan and North Indian carving it is actually the metal axe-head fitted to the handle (fig. 35, 2 *a*). In the ornate Hoysala sculpture the axe, like the other weapons, is profusely decorated (fig. 35, 2 *b*).

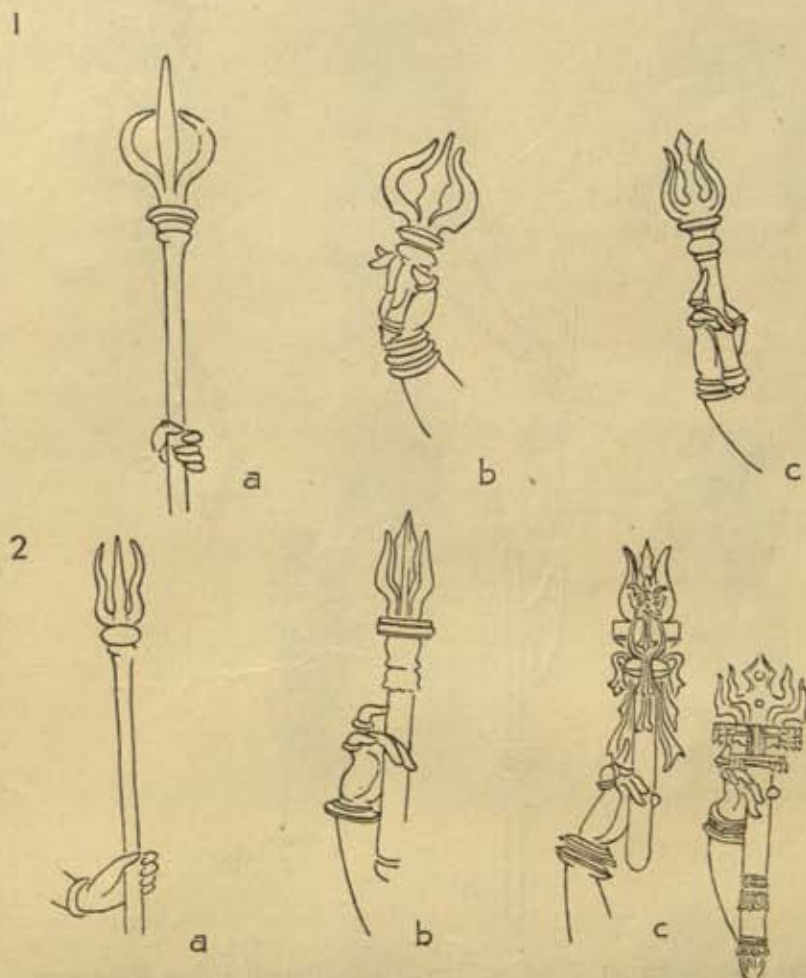


FIG. 34. *Attributes of Śiva—trident* : 1, Tamil, a, from Kānchīpuram, b-c, bronzes in Madras Museum ; 2, Chāḷukyan, a, from Bādāmi, b, from Bāgali, c, from Halebid

Jaṭā. The *jaṭā* of Śiva differs from area to area as from age to age. Just as its depiction in the Gupta period (fig. 36, 1 a) is different from medieval representation and that of the Pallava period (fig. 36, 2 a) is different from that of the Chōḷa era (fig. 36, 2 b), similarly, the object as found in northern (fig. 36, 3 a and b) and central India and the Deccan (fig. 36, 1 b and c) is different from that found in southern India (fig. 36, 2 a and b). In the case of Bhairava and Dakṣiṇā-mūrti in the south the flaming hair and *jaṭā* are both shown (figs. 38 and 37).

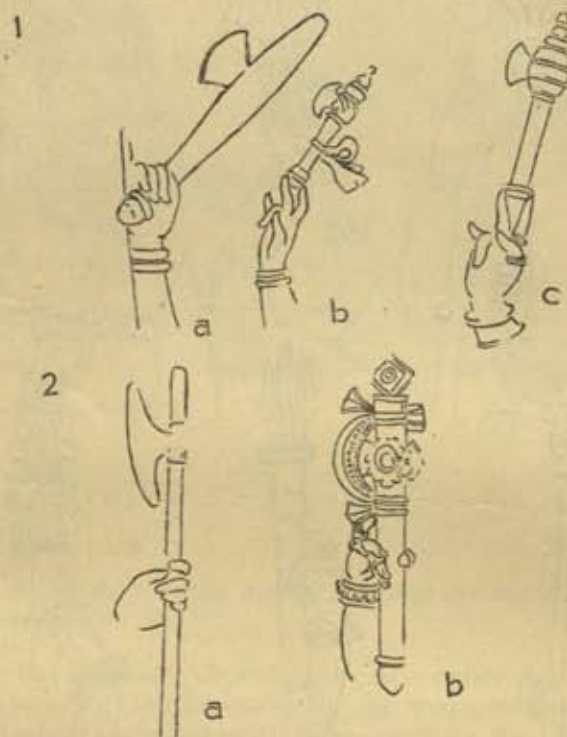


FIG. 35. *Attributes of Śiva—axe* : 1, Tamil, a, from Mahābalipuram, b, from Māyāvaram, c, from Madhurai ; 2, Chālukyan tradition, a, from Bādāmi, b, from Kadur

The *third eye*, which is another distinguishing feature of Śiva, is usually centrally across the forehead in all periods of sculpture (fig. 39, b), though in Kushān and early Gupta sculptures (pl. XIX A and B) it occurs sometimes centrally along the forehead (fig. 39, a).

2

1



a



b



c

2



a



b

3



a



b

Fig. 36. Attributes of Śiva—jaṭā : 1, a, from Khoh, b-c, Chālukyan, respectively from Bādāmi and Halebid ; 2, Tamil, a, from Tiruchirapalli, b, bronze in Madras Museum ; 3, North India, a, from Uttar Pradesh, b, in Rājshāhī Museum



FIG. 37. Attributes of Śiva :
jaṭābhāra (mass of
locks), sculpture from
Choḷamāligai (Madras
Museum)



FIG. 38. Attributes of Śiva :
jaṭā as flaming
hairs, sculpture in
Madras Museum



a



b

FIG. 39. Attributes of Śiva—the
third eye : a, sculpture
in Indian Museum ; b,
from Bhumarā

Ardhanārīśvara

Śiva as Ardhanārīśvara in the Tamil area shows an evolution during the centuries. The early type, of which there is a remarkable example in the Dharmarāja-ratha at Mahābalipuram (Chingleput District), is a masterpiece of art showing one-half male and the other female (pl. XX A). In spite of the inevitable monstrosity of the form, one must admire the characteristic droop in the shoulder, the dip near the waist and the ample pelvis of the female-half, and the broad shoulder and chest of the male-half, both showing an excellent knowledge of human anatomy and effectiveness in spite of the difficulty of the *samabhaṅga* pose. In somewhat later sculptures, as at the Nageśvarasvāmī temple at Kumbakonam and Tiruvirāmiśvaram (both in Tanjore District), representing the earliest Choḷa art in its transitional stage from Pallava, flexions are resorted to and the demeanour of the figures change (pl. XX B). These early sculptures show two arms of Śiva on one side and only one arm of Pārvatī in the other half. But in later sculptures, as in the late Choḷa and Vijayanagara periods, the figure is a stylized one, divided into two with an equal number of arms on both sides and the two halves having exactly the same anatomy except for the female breast on the left. In late Pallava sculptures Ardhanārīśvara is shown seated on Nandin, whilst in the Kailāsanātha temple at Kāñchīpuram

Car
m



A

A, *Nara-nārāyaṇa*, from *Deogarh, Jhānsī*; B, *Dakṣiṇā-mūrti*, from *Cholaṁāḷigai, Tanjore* (Madras Museum)



B

u
Q
M
u



C

C, *Somāskanda*, from *Nidūr, Tanjore* (Madras Museum)

56A



A



B



C



D

A, *Somāskanda*, from *Mahābalipuram*, *Chingleput*; B and C, *Umāmaheśvara*, respectively from *Hemāvati*, *Anantapur* (*Madras Museum*), and *Uttar Pradesh*; D, *Tripurāntaka*, from *Kailāsanātha temple*, *Kānchīpuram*



A



B



C



D

A and B, Bhairava, respectively from Pattisvaram, Tanjore (Madras Museum) and Bombay; C and D, Bhairava-cum-Gajāntaka, respectively from Bhuvaneswar and Belurghāt, Dinājpur (both in Indian Museum)



A



B



C



D

Nāṭeśa: A, from Tiruvelangāḍu (Madras Museum); B, from Mukhalingam, Viśākhapatnam;
C, from Rakhatrā, Gwalior; D, from Sankarbāndhā, Dacca (Dacca Museum)



A



B



C

A, Nalanda, from Uttar Pradesh; B and C, Vipādhara, respectively from Seyyana, Tanjore (Madras Museum) and Lakshmanādal, Dehra Dun



A



B



C

Gaṅgādhara: A, from Tiruchirapalli; B, from Elephanta, Bombay; C, from Koṭumbālūr, Pudukkoṭṭai

To face plate XXVII



A



B

569



C



D

A, *Dakṣiṇā-mūrti* from *Kāveripākkam*; B, *Tripurāntaka* from *Bṛhadiśvara temple, Tanjore*; C, *Naṭeṣa* from *Paṭṭaḍakal*; D, *Gaṇāntaka* from *Valuvūr*

and in other early Chola sculptures Nandin is shown beside the deity, one of whose hands rests on it. In the stylized late figures Nandin is absent.

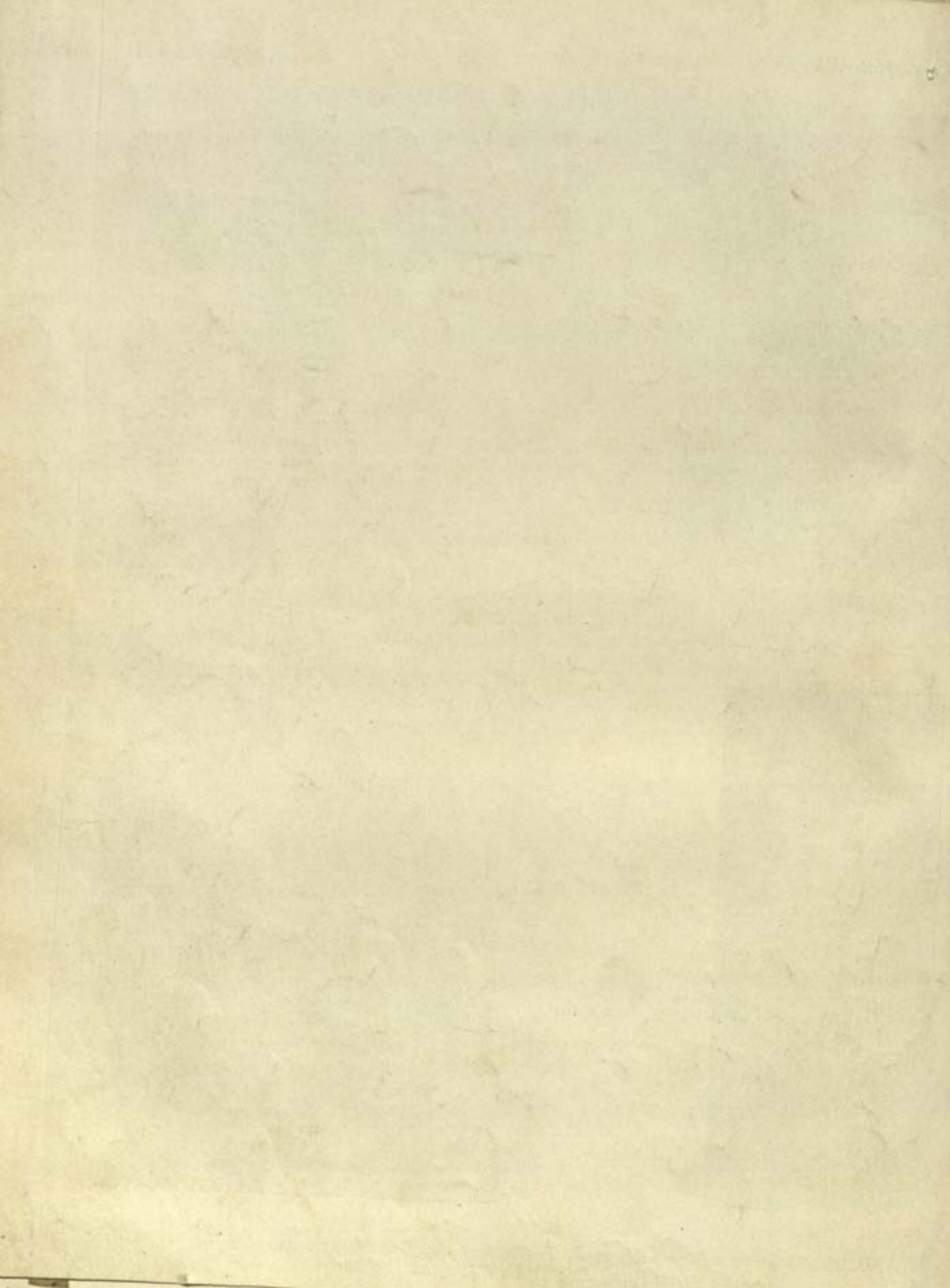
The form of Śiva itself is distinguished in South and North India by certain differential features. The Ardhanārīśvara concept of Śiva is emphasized in South Indian sculptures and, though it is only in the actual Ardhanārīśvara representation that full and explicit expression is given, a suggestion of the form in representations of Śiva is achieved by a slight change in the depiction of the *kuṇḍala* on either ear. The *patra-kuṇḍala* worn by a woman is shown on Śiva's left ear and the right ear is either bare or has a *makara-kuṇḍala* (fig. 37). This kind of treatment of Śiva's *kuṇḍalas* is rare in northern sculpture, though there are instances. Never is he shown in South India with his *liṅga* perceptible, as in some North Indian sculpture, except perhaps in Guḍimallam where the *liṅga* is clear in spite of the drapery. In some North Indian sculptures not only has Śiva this feature but the *liṅga* is erect. This is to emphasize the concept of *ūrdhvaliṅga* and his yogic control of senses as voiced in Kālidāsa in the first verse of his *Mālavikāgnimitra* : *kāntā-sammiśra-deho=py=avishaya-manasām yah parastād=yatinām*.

This feature is best illustrated in North Indian representations of Ardhanārīśvara, where, though one-half is Pārvatī and the other half Śiva, still the *ūrdhvaliṅga* depiction persists. It may be noted here that in the Ardhanārīśvara from Bengal the *ūrdhvaliṅga* of Śiva is present on the right side as in any other complete image of the deity (pl. XX C). This peculiarity extends to the area of Orissa, south of which it is absent. Even in Chālukyan sculptures strongly influenced by the northern Gupta traditions, this feature likewise is absent, which is in accordance with the southern tradition generally. This is not surprising ; we shall see presently the area around the capital of the Western Chālukyas was the meeting-place of South Indian and North Indian traditions. For is it not here—at Bādāmi, Aihole and Paṭṭadakal—that the northern and southern forms of the *vimāna-kalaśas*, crowns of temples, occur side by side ? Here the Gupta style of Gaṅgā and Yamunā guarding the gateway occurs, and here the southern tradition of the seated dwarfish *śaṅkha* and *padmanidhis* is found, which, judging from the description of Kālidāsa in his *Meghadūta* (II, 19), *dvar-opānte likhita-vapushau śaṅkha-padmau cha dṛishṭvā*, should have been in vogue in North India as well.

Kalyāṇasundara

The form of Kalyāṇasundara, or Śiva marrying Pārvatī (*pāṇi-grahaṇa*), is a common type all over India. Kālidāsa's picture of Himavat giving Pārvatī in marriage to Śiva (*Kumārasambhava*, VII, 76) is the scene in the early medieval western Indian sculpture, as at Elephanta (pl. XXI A). In South India the early Chola bronzes present only the two principal figures of the wedlock in bronzes (pl. XXI B) ; stone sculptures showing the complete scene are rare. In sculptures of the Vijayanagara and Nāyaka periods, Pārvatī is depicted as standing between Viṣṇu and Śiva, the former giving her in marriage to the latter ; and here the pouring of water by Viṣṇu on Śiva's hand and the presenting of Pārvatī as a gift or *dāna* to Śiva emphasizes the *kanyakā-dāna* aspect of marriage. In Bengal, the usual representation of the marriage of Śiva shows Pārvatī in front of Śiva (pl. XIX C) probably indicating the *sapta-paḍī* or seven friendly steps that make the wife the companion of her husband in life.¹ This is a good example of local emphasis on a custom in sculpture.

¹ Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 121.



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¹ Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

Viṇādhara

Śiva as Viṇādhara, known as Viṇādhara-dakṣiṇā-mūrti, is popular in South Indian sculpture and is always shown as a standing figure carrying the *viṇā* (lute) in two of his hands, the other two holding the axe and the deer. In sculptures from the Chālukyan area, Viṇādhara Śiva is shown seated, and his concept is mixed up with that of Virabhadra, who, like Gaṇeśa, flanks the Saptamātrikā group. In these representations he most often carries the drum and the trident in his other pair of arms. In Bengal there is no separate representation of Viṇādhara form, though the concept is very prominent in some of the forms of Naṭeśa, with which this idea is commingled. In some representations of Naṭeśa from Bengal the deity is shown dancing on the bull, with the *viṇā* in one of his many pairs of arms. This is the Viṇādhara-cum-Naṭeśa of Bengal.

Dakṣiṇā-mūrti

Early representations of Dakṣiṇā-mūrti Śiva as the teacher of the highest truth closely resemble the Nārāyaṇa form of Viṣṇu, as may be seen in Gupta sculpture where two deer and a snake are shown at his feet, his right hand being in the *vyākhyāna-mudrā* or teaching attitude (pl. XXII A). These characteristics are found in Pallava sculptures of Dakṣiṇā-mūrti (pl. XXVIII A), but the deer and snake, especially the former, which suggest the scene of the first sermon of Buddha, disappear in Chōla sculpture (pl. XXII B), where only old sages listen to the young teacher, crushing ignorance in the form of a dwarf beneath his feet. From the medieval period Dakṣiṇā-mūrti becomes scarce in North India and like some forms as Bhikṣhāṭana-mūrti, Kaṅkāla-mūrti and Somāskanda become a form more or less confined to South India.

Somāskanda

Though Kālidāsa has suggested the form of Somāskanda in his description of the happy Śiva and Umā in the company of Skanda (*Raghuvamśa*, III, 23), no such figure has been discovered in North India. On the other hand it is the Umā-maheśvara type which is popular there. Somāskanda, i.e. Śiva with Umā and baby Skanda, an invariable feature in Pallava temples where they occur behind the *liṅga* on the wall of the cell (pl. XXIII A), becomes a regular feature as a bronze *utsava-vigraha* in the early Chōla period (pl. XXII C) and continues as one of the most popular forms for Śiva-worship in temples of the Tamil area. Umā-maheśvara is, however, more popular in the Kanarese districts (pl. XXIII B), where the northern tradition (pl. XXIII C) is often noticed.

Tripurāntaka

In all early representations of Tripurāntaka up to the early Chōla period, Śiva is shown standing or seated in a pose resembling *ālīdha*, on a chariot with a drawn bow in his hand and in the act of attacking the enemy. In the famous panel of Tripurāntaka from the Ellora temple the representation is that of Śiva standing on a chariot with a drawn bow attacking the Tripuras. In Pallava sculptures, e.g. from Kailāsanātha temple at Kānchīpuram, the representation is similar (pl. XXIII D). In the perambulatory passage of the central shrine of the Brīhadiśvara temple at Tanjore there are fine early Chōla paintings of about the time of the temple itself (c. 1000), and the most magnificent of these is a representation of Śiva seated on his chariot and fighting the Tripuras with

his drawn bow. But in many other contemporary and in all later representations Tripurāntaka is generally shown as standing with a bow in his hands, his left leg occasionally resting on a dwarf, obviously Apasmāra, who is usually shown trampled by Nāṭeśa and Dakṣiṇā-mūrti (pl. XXVIII B). In some late sculptures of the Vijayanagara and Nāyaka periods, Śiva is represented standing sideways on his chariot and attacking the demons with his bow. An instance is the painting of the deity from Lepākshī (Anantapur District).

Bhairava

The commonest representation of Bhairava is that of Baṭuka-Bhairava, stark naked, with an elongated *yajñopavīta* of bells or skulls, flaming hair, and a *kaṭisūtra* composed of snake (fig. 38). His face is represented in anger, and sharp protruding teeth may be noticed at either end of the mouth. In South Indian representations he is always shown beside a dog, his vehicle, and he carries *ḍamaru* (small drum), *pāśa* (noose), trident and skull-cup in his four hands (pl. XXIV A). He has knit eye-brows. His *yajñopavīta* in the Tamil country is composed of a garland of bells, and the *kaṭisūtra* is invariably a snake. His feet are bare and rest on the pedestal. In North Indian and in Chālukyan sculpture the difference to be noticed is that he carries a sword in the place of the *pāśa*, the other weapons being the same. His flaming hair radiates all around sinuously, and the tips of his locks curl into terminal circlets. His *kaṭisūtra* is not composed of the snake, and his *yajñopavīta* is a garland of skulls. He stands not on the pedestal directly but on wooden *pādukās* (sandals), an invariable feature in North Indian and Chālukyan sculptures (pl. XXIV B). These figures are late medieval.

Gaja-saṁhāra-mūrti

The representation of Gaja-saṁhāra-mūrti as a pure concept is confined to the Tamil and Chālukyan areas. The finest representation of Gaja-saṁhāra-mūrti from South India is the early Chōla bronze from Valuvūr (Tanjore District). The deity rests his right leg on the elephant's head, while the other is lifted up and bent; the body is twisted and two of his eight arms opened out to stretch the hide of the animal in a characteristic manner (pl. XXVIII D). Other good examples come from Dārāsuram (Tanjore District), Perūr and elsewhere. The representation of Gaja-saṁhāra-mūrti in the Chālukyan area, though very similar to that in the Tamil Districts, has its own characteristics. The sculpture from Hemāvati (Anantapur District), representing Nolamba work, shows the earlier Chālukyan tradition, while the one from Halebīd (Hasan District) depicts the later one. In the latter not only has Śiva sixteen arms, unlike the eight-armed Chōla figures, but he is shown only as dancing in the *chatura* pose with his left leg slightly raised. But even here the concept is purely that of Śiva as slayer of Gajāśura.

The traditional representation of Gaja-saṁhāra-mūrti in North India is different. In the caves of Elephanta and Ellora the form of Andhakāśura is graphically portrayed in a very spirited attitude, holding up the demon Andhaka after goring him with his *triśūla*. In the representation at Elephanta, which, though mutilated, is a masterpiece of workmanship, Śiva is represented appropriately as in a rage. The presence of Yogeśvarī, the emaciated goddess produced from the flame of Śiva's third eye, and Devī, as witness of this great encounter of her spouse with this formidable demon, is clear in the well-preserved representation at Ellora. In this, above Śiva and held up by two of his outstretched arms from among eight, is the elephant's skin, which includes the drooping elephant's head and legs; the elephant's head is not present under the deity's feet as we find in South Indian representations. The reason for this is that this figure of Śiva represents

at once Śiva as Andhakāsura-saṁhāra-mūrti and as Gaja-saṁhāra-mūrti.¹ The form occurs in exactly the same fashion in early medieval representations of Andhakāsura-saṁhāra-mūrti from Orissa, good examples of which exist in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (pl. XXIV C). Here also Yogeśvarī and Devī are present. The form of Bhairava from Bengal similarly combines these three aspects (pl. XXIV D). This combination of Gajāntaka and Andhakāntaka represents the North Indian tradition and in a way is appropriate, as according to the story of the *Varāha-purāṇa* Gajāśura was first overcome by Śiva, who used the hide of the animal as an upper garment before he attacked Andhakāsura. The two concepts have therefore been united into one.

Atiriktāṅga-Bhairava

Representations of Atiriktāṅga-Bhairava, a skeleton-form, are frequently found in the Ellora caves; this is not surprising, as other skeleton-figures, e.g. Chāmuṇḍā, are known to Chālukyan tradition (above, p. 30). Yogeśvarī at the feet of Andhaka-saṁhāra-mūrti is yet another example unknown in the Tamil region, where the only known skeleton-form is Bhṛīṅgin.

Naṭeśa

One of the most famous forms of Śiva all over India, and especially in South India, is his dancing form known as Naṭeśa. The most popular form in South India is the *ānanda-tāṇḍava* with the left leg raised, the right leg resting on Apasmāra; the right lower hand in *abhaya*, the right upper holding the *damaru*, the left upper the flame, and the left lower in *kari-hasta*. His locks are half-tied up, parts of his *jaṭā* fly about on either side during his ecstatic movements, a skull appears from his locks, a *dhatūra*-flower is stuck near it, snakes entwine the locks and *ketaki*-petals peep from them. The celestial river Gaṅgā, settled on one of his *jaṭās*, joins her palms in devotional admiration, while *pārijāta* and other celestial flowers are shown slipping from the *jaṭā* like stars on the firmament, red in the evening glow. A bronze representing a four-handed Śiva dancing in this position is found in almost every temple of importance in the peninsula (pl. XXV A). Naṭeśa in the *chatura* and *lalita* poses is extremely rare in South Indian Tamil representation. The *chatura* image of Naṭeśa from Nallūr (Tanjore District) and from Tiruvarangulam (Pudukkoṭṭai) are stray examples, and in the former the four additional arms form another unusual feature. But both of them are shown dancing on the Apasmāra dwarf, a constant feature in South Indian sculptures.

The *chatura* and *lalita* mode of dance, however, is a greater favourite in West and North India and in the Chālukyan area. In one of the early caves at Mogalrājapuram near Vijayawāḍa on the top of the façade is a representation of Naṭeśa. Unfortunately the figure is mutilated, but it can easily be seen that it was a fine figure representing multi-armed Śiva in the *ānanda-tāṇḍava* pose, his left leg resting on the Apasmāra dwarf in the South Indian fashion. There is here a blend of North Indian and South Indian traditions, for the figure is multi-armed following the North Indian tradition (cf. Kālidāsa's *bhuja-taru-vana*, 'forest of arms', *Meghadūta*, I, 36) the South Indian element being represented by the dance-pose and the dwarf.

¹ C. Sivaramamurti, 'Iconographic Gleanings from Epigraphy', *Proceedings of the Thirteenth Oriental Conference* (Nagpur, 1951), Archaeology Section, p. 39.

In very early Western Chālukyan sculptures Śiva is represented as dancing beside the bull in the *chatura* or *lalita* pose, sometimes on the floor. In Tamil sculptures the lotus-platform occurs as a circular or oval support beneath the dwarf. As already pointed out above (p. 57), Bādāmi and Paṭṭaḍakal represent the region in the Chālukyan area where the northern and southern elements meet. The lotus-pedestal beneath the feet may sometimes be absent. Sometimes Naṭeśa from this area is represented as dancing over a dwarf and with only four hands, one of which carries a *śūla* or a *vṛishabha-dhvaja* (bull-standard) as in the panel from the Virūpāksha temple at Paṭṭaḍakal (pl. XXVIII C). This feature may also be observed in the rock-cut temple of Kailāsa at Ellora, where Śiva similarly dances on a dwarf—a Tamil feature—the North Indian characteristics being the absence of the dwarf and the presence of the bull. In the Orissan area, e.g. at Mukhalin-gam (Viśākhapatnam District), Śiva is represented as multi-armed and dancing in the *chatura* pose, with the bull beside him (pl. XXV B). Similarly in the rock-cut panels near Budhi-Chanderi in Gwalior, Śiva is dancing in the *lalita* pose with the bull beside him (pl. XXV C).

In the eastern school of medieval sculpture there is a characteristic representation of Naṭarāja known as Narteśvara (pl. XXV D). Here Śiva is multi-armed and dances in the *chatura* pose, not beside but on the back of the bull, which also is often represented as in an ecstatic state. The bull thus takes the place of the Apasmāra dwarf of South Indian representations.¹

There is another peculiarity in the iconography of Naṭeśa from Bengal. He is here represented not only as dancing on the bull as the lord of dance but sometimes as carrying the *vīṇā* as the presiding deity over music. In other North Indian sculptures (pl. XXVI A) he is shown sometimes with the *vīṇā* but dancing not on the bull but beside it. This aspect of Śiva is separately represented in one of the Dakṣiṇā-mūrti types in South India known as Viṇādhara-dakṣiṇā-mūrti (pl. XXVI B). The god is shown as standing with two of his four arms in the attitude of playing the *vīṇā*. In the Kanarese area and the Deccan, Śiva as Virabhadra, flanking the Saptamātrikās along with Gaṇeśa, is represented as seated and carrying the *vīṇā*, just like Viṇādhara-dakṣiṇā-mūrti in the Tamil area. In North Indian sculpture Śiva is sometimes represented as seated or standing along with Pārvaṭī and carrying the *vīṇā*, again like the Viṇādhara-dakṣiṇā-mūrti of South India. A seated representation is at Ellora, and an example in standing pose is at the Lakkhāmaṇḍal temple (Dehra Dun District), where Nandin is shown beside him (pl. XXVI C), thus combining a concept of the South Indian icon Vṛishabhavāhana-mūrti. These different forms of Śiva, seated, standing and dancing, all the time carrying a *vīṇā* and sometimes fused into another equally important concept, shows the popularity of the Viṇādhara aspect of the god.

The form of Naṭeśa thus betrays distinctive differentiation in different geographical areas, dancing four-armed on the Apasmāra dwarf in South India, dancing multi-armed in the *chatura* or *lalita* pose on the ground on lotus-pedestal, sometimes with the bull beside him, in the central area, and dancing, multi-armed, in the *chatura* or *lalita* pose on the bull in the eastern school.

Gaṅgādhara

The concept of Gaṅgādhara and its chronological development is an interesting study. The somewhat rare anthropomorphic representations of Gaṅgā descending on

¹ Bhattasali, *op. cit.*, p. 112; R. P. Chanda in *An. Rep. Arch. Surv. Ind.*, 1924-25 (1927), p. 126.

the locks of Śiva in three streams, like the ones from Aihoḷe and Elephanta (pl. XXVII B) emphasize the *tripathagā*-aspect of the stream. A representation of a special nature emphasizing another aspect of Gaṅgā as Jāhnavī, the stream that issued from the ear of Jāhnu the sage, is found on the Kailāsa temple at Ellora. In such a case the form of Gaṅgādhara is sometimes characterized by a special name Gaṅgā-visarjana-mūrti.

The early representation of Gaṅgādhara from the Tiruchirapalli cave (pl. XXVII A) of the time of Mahendravarman (about the beginning of the seventh century) shows Gaṅgādhara unaccompanied by Pārvatī and just receiving Gaṅgā on two of his locks held out with his fingers for the purpose; Gaṅgā is shown in anthropomorphic form coming and settling down with her hands joined in adoration. In sculptures of over a century later Gaṅgādhara is similarly shown as receiving Gaṅgā but with Pārvatī beside him, evidently not very happy in having a co-wife but at the same time not pronouncedly displeased. Such representations are from the late Pallava temples like the Kailāsanātha and Mukteśvara temples at Kāñchīpuram or the Gaṅgādhara-mūrti panel from Ellora or from Elephanta. The earlier type, without Pārvatī, continues sometimes even in the ninth century Chōḷa sculpture (pl. XXVII C). In the Chōḷa sculpture of the eleventh century at Gangaikondachōḷapuram (Tiruchirapalli District) Śiva is shown as embracing Pārvatī, thus trying to make her forget her grievance of acquiring a new co-wife. The hands of Śiva touch the bosom of Pārvatī in his conciliatory love-making to her. But in



FIG. 40. Śiva as Gaṅgādhara, painting from Lepākshī temple, Anantapur District

Vijayanagara sculptures and paintings, Pārvatī is so sullen that Śiva has to caress her chin and try all his wit to appease her anger. The bronze representation from Vaidiśvaran-koyil (Tanjore District) and the stone sculpture from Tārāmangalam (Salem District) of about the fifteenth or sixteenth century represent this later iconographic development. A painted representation of this phase is found in one of the panels adorning the ceiling of the *ardhamandapa* (antechamber) of the temple of Virabhadra at Lepākshī (fig. 40). Here the eagerness of Gaṅgādhara to appease Pārvatī looking downcast, consistently with the dictum of the *Śilparatna*, is clearly represented. This continues in the later centuries. Sculptures of Gaṅgādhara thus provide an excellent example of the change of iconographic concepts through the centuries. Here the change is affected by the time-factor, as it is by the geographical factor in the case of Naṭeśa.¹

GLOSSARY

- Khaṭakā-mukha* : position of the fingers of the hand to hold something, generally a lotus or lily but often without it, yet suggestive of it.
- Yajñopavita* ; *vastra-yajñopavita* ; *muktā-yajñopavita* : the sacred thread ; the upper cloth itself worn like the usual sacred thread ; composed of pearls instead of thread.
- Suvarṇa-vaikakshaka* : ornamental golden cross-band worn across the chest.
- Udara-bandha* : stomach-band.
- Kaṭisūtra* : waist-cord or band.
- Karaṇḍa-mukuta* : crown so called because it resembles a pile of pots.
- Jaṭā-mukuta* : crown composed of locks of hair.
- Kartarimukha* : position of the fingers of the hand all straight except the ring-finger and thumb, the fore and middle finger slightly apart (resembling a pair of scissors) and intended to hold aloft some weapon or attribute.
- Tripatāka* : position of the fingers of the hand all straight except the ring-finger and thumb.
- Keśa-bandha* : loose knot of dressed hair of women.
- Dhammilla* : richly-dressed feminine coiffure.
- Yoga-paṭṭa*, *ardhayoga-paṭṭa* : band entwining back and both the legs for maintaining a seated position usually in *yoga* ; similar band but for only one leg, the other being at ease.
- Paryāṅka-granthi-bandha* : band tied to entwine the legs, same as *yoga-paṭṭa*.
- Ardha-paryāṅka* : pose with one leg bent and the other free.
- Ayudha-purushas* : personified weapons.
- Samabhaṅga* : straight or erect pose without flexions.
- Urdhvaliṅga* : upward *membrum virile* suggesting control of senses.
- Ālīḍha* : warrior pose with right leg bent forwards and left leg backwards.
- Chatura* : dance pose showing both legs somewhat bent but with right foot completely on the ground and heel of left foot somewhat raised.
- Kari-hasta* : position of hand held slantingly straight in dance.
- Lalita* : dance pose with the position of legs in *chatura* reversed.

¹ The photographs illustrating this article have been obtained through the courtesy of the Department of Archaeology, Government of India ; the Archaeological Departments of Mysore and Gwalior ; the Museum of Archaeology, Mathurā ; Government Museum, Madras ; and British Museum, London.